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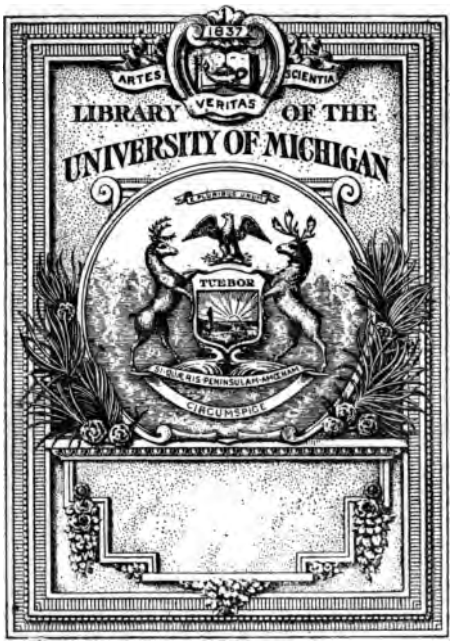
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MODERN PUNCTUATION

Its Utilities and Conventions

MODERN PUNCTUATION

Its Utilities and Conventions

BY

GEORGE SUMMEY, JR.

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TO

ALBERT T. SUMMEY

OF THE 105TH ENGINEERS, AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to set forth the essential facts of contemporary usage in punctuation, together with the considerations applicable in the choice and management of points. For matters where uniformity is essential, there are satisfactory current books by expert printers like the late Mr. Theodore Low De Vinne; but there has been no adequate recent account of structural pointing—the use of points that have to be employed not according to any existing or possible set of rules but according to individual circumstances. The so-called rules of punctuation, as a general code for all conditions, have not worked. There are questions of structural pointing that cannot be rightly settled without consideration of such circumstances as the progress of thought in the paragraph, the use of a given point in the context, or the occurrence of a structural boundary at a line-end rather than within the line.

As the facts of punctuation are of infinite number, it has seemed desirable to concentrate attention upon practice in recent American-printed books and American periodicals. With a few exceptions the books cited as examples of modern practice are of dates not earlier than 1900; the periodicals cited are of the years 1917 and 1918. There is an abundance of matter earlier than 1900 or 1917 quite as well written and punctuated, but for the present purpose it is safest to set limits that will allow for any changes brought about by the general use of typewriters and typographical machines. Except where the contrary is indicated, the examples are from works within the limits

mentioned. In all extracts the original styles have been carefully followed in spelling, pointing, and capitalization, except that in a few cases small capitals have been set lower-case. As a matter of course, styles of extracts are not always in agreement with the styles used in the text.

Aside from the obligations acknowledged in the text or not capable of being specially acknowledged, the author is under special indebtedness to his wife for constant help with material and manuscript; to his father, the Rev. Dr. George Summey of New Orleans, for suggestions and material; to Lawrence E. Nichols, Esq., of Raleigh, for technical information about printing; to Dr. C. Alphonso Smith of the United States Naval Academy for a suggestion regarding punctuation and the paragraph; to the readers of the Quinn and Boden Company Press for hints regarding word-division and typographical styles; and to Professors George Philip Krapp, W. W. Lawrence, Harry Morgan Ayres, and H. R. Steeves—all of Columbia University—for their kindness in reading the manuscript. Mr. Krapp's searching and friendly criticism has been particularly valuable.

So far as any of the opinions here set forth are mistaken, the author hopes in the interest of good teaching, good writing, and good printing that the necessary criticism may be forthcoming. Unquestionably there is need for a better understanding of an art—an art and not a code—which is practiced blindly or intelligently by all who speak through pen or type.

GEORGE SUMMEY, JR.

WEST RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
January 13, 1919

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TERMS USED WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING EXPLANATION

Compounding points. Points used between main clauses or the equivalent of main clauses.

Compounding hyphen. The hyphen used for coinages or half-coalesced compounds. The division hyphen is used between parts of what is ordinarily a solid word.

Curves. Marks of parenthesis shaped thus ().

Display. Unless the context indicates the contrary, display will mean the exhibition of grouping or meaning by line length, white space, indention, or centering of lines. Display matter is in contrast with straight body matter.

Em dash, en dash, two-em dash. Respectively the ordinary dash, the short dash used in expressions like *1914–1918*, and the double dash.

Group. A word or any number of words not more than a sentence and not checked, save at beginning or end, by a punctuation mark. (Limitation to the sentence is arbitrary.) With indication in the context, the term will be used occasionally without the limitations noted.

Index. A reference mark referring to a footnote or appendix note.

Lower-case letters. Small letters.

Office style. Printing-office practice in regard to capitals, points, italic, indexes, etc.

Open. Not set off by punctuation. (Sometimes used, but not in this book, to mean "light or economical in pointing.")

Original matter. An author's own words, as opposed to quoted matter.

Parenthesis. Used of structure. The points usually called parentheses are here called curves.

Point, pointed. Punctuation mark, punctuated.

Roman. Roman type; perpendicular type, the most familiar style of letter.

Roman quote. In roman type and enclosed in quote marks.

Roman open. In roman type and not enclosed in quote marks.

Solid matter. Matter not leaded. "Leading" means the insertion of metal strips between lines of type for the sake of white space. Solid typewritten matter is sometimes called single-spaced.

Structural points. Here used of period, question and exclamation marks, colon, semicolon, comma, dash (except ellipsis dash and en dash), and curves.

Superior figures or letters. Figures or letters occupying the upper part of the type body, with white space showing below.

Suspension. Checking, holding attention, carrying the reader over intervening parenthesis, interruption whether intended or not.

Suspension periods. Translation of French *points de suspension.* Periods, usually in groups of three and usually spaced in English text, employed not to mark ellipsis from a quotation but to suggest an interruption or meditative pause.

Text. Straight matter, as opposed to extracts, tables, and footnotes.

MODERN PUNCTUATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A HARVARD professor of English, the author of a well known textbook on English composition, has said of punctuation, "I have never yet come across a book on the subject which did not leave me more puzzled than it found me."

If the words are a warning, they are also an invitation. Punctuation ought to be understood, because it is bound up with the important social art of communication in writing. And it need be no more mysterious than harmony of tone or color—matters at least equally difficult, yet successfully reduced to useful theory.

The reasons why punctuation is so commonly not understood, or understood wrong, are not far to seek. For one thing, textbook writers have practically divorced punctuation from its relation to the larger units of composition. As ordinarily presented, punctuation is concerned almost exclusively with the sentence. It is commonly set forth by aid of single sentences isolated from their context.

The single-sentence method is legitimate only in a measure. There are numerous questions of pointing which can be settled only with reference to groups larger than the sentence. Between successive statements there may be a full stop, a comma, a semicolon, sometimes a colon or

a dash; and there is no safe choice which ignores the meaning and movement of the passage. In questions of pointing, relations within the sentence are not always decisive.

The current rules, moreover, are too numerous and too rigid. A desk book in wide use catalogues twenty-three cases in which the comma is "required" and six cases in which it is not required. Here are three of the twenty-three prescriptions: the comma is required to separate parenthetical expressions from the context; it is required in cases of ellipsis; it is required "before *not,* when introducing an antithetical clause." But what are the facts? To group parenthetical clauses, commas may or may not be required; there are parenthetical clauses with curves or dashes, and some not pointed at all. The ellipsis comma, in the proper sense of the word ellipsis, is rare and usually awkward. Before an antithetical clause beginning with *not,* a comma is often unnecessary or clumsy. If English were a dead language like Ciceronian Latin, there might be a full set of positive rules; but English is a living language.

There are yet other misleading rules in currency. We are told, for example, that "when the members of a compound sentence are complex in construction or contain commas," one must use a semicolon. The rule is misleading because too general. There are numerous cases in which the comma is a sufficient compounding point in spite of other commas in either or both of the clauses.

According to another tradition repeated in recent books, a long subject, especially if an infinitive phrase or a group ending with a verb, should be pointed from the predicate by a comma. There are cases of the kind even in newspapers, which in general are economical of points; but the rule in its categorical form is misleading. Such

subjects do not always require the comma; when they do, it is very often because of clumsy construction.

By a natural association, the dead rules are commonly illustrated by dead specimens. To exemplify the law that one must use the semicolon between sentence members containing commas, a current book gives this:

> He was courteous, not cringing, to superiors; affable, but not familiar, to equals; and kind, but not condescending, to inferiors.

The punctuation fits the words; but since nobody today would write such a sentence, the example and rule seem remote from life. Such a sentence ought to be cited only by way of warning.

There is a widespread and wholesome objection to anything in words or pointing that suggests stiffness or self-consciousness. Save where formality is in order, written English has approached the conversational manner. In punctuation as in structure, students should be taught to use the language of the day. But too often they are given sets of rules which could be rigidly applied only to dead English.

No Single "Working Principle"

According to one recent writer, the "working principle" of punctuation is emphasis. Another maintains that the fundamental consideration is clearness. Others insist on uniformity, or on the use of the smallest possible variety of points.

Though all of these views are enlightening, they lack perspective. Emphasis needs to be considered in questions of pointing, but as a single working principle is insufficient. Questions of emphasis are also questions of

clearness, the two considerations being inseparable in practice. And both clearness and emphasis are essentially linked with usage. A period is effective as a signal of completion for the sentence because it is a customary mark for the purpose.

There is no single working principle. In cases of punctuation it is necessary to apply one or more of several considerations. There are questions of custom, clearness, emphasis, movement, economy, variety—sometimes even of appearance on the page. By force of custom, points are signals which indicate certain relations. At the same time they are suspensive marks which check movement and suggest certain weights of emphasis. Even the consideration of variety is important. Noticeably monotonous pointing is a symptom of lifeless structure.

To experienced writers who do their own pointing, all of this is familiar. They know how to punctuate clearly, economically, and effectively for their purposes. They also know that good pointing depends on good structure. But nobody has recently taken the trouble to put this knowledge into accessible form.

Two Ruling Traditions

The current textbooks and chapters on punctuation are still governed by two traditions, both of them legislative and formalistic. The formulation of theory has been left almost exclusively to printers and to writers of school textbooks. Their most prominent aim has been "correctness"; their method has been prescription.

If properly understood, correctness is of course a legitimate aim. It implies, for one thing, the use of marks within the limits of general and special conventions. But when applied to matters of art, "correctness" is mislead-

ing. It is safer to speak of utility or accuracy. Accuracy in pointing of course requires the writer to keep safely within convention; but it also means the use of marks in such a way as to indicate the writer's meaning clearly, with accurate emphasis, and with whatever tone and movement may be suitable to the occasion. The fact is theoretically familiar; but the notion that there is an absolute rule for every case is still firmly entrenched.

Printers are business men, often artists as well, who wish to produce satisfactory typographical work at a profit. Their concern is not with literary but with typographical composition. They seek correctness, consistency, and intelligibility, but manifestly cannot assume the writer's functions any more than is necessary to the reputation of the office. If printers are required to do half the pointing, they are not to be blamed for making rules which will roughly serve for average cases. The more definite the rules, when copy is defective, the less waste of time and capital. But printers' rules are not invariable laws for writers; nor do the current style books attempt to set forth the rhetorical aspects of punctuation in any comprehensive way. Printers lay stress on consistency and good design; naturally enough they leave to the writer the finer distinctions of emphasis and meaning.

Textbooks for students of English composition have lately treated punctuation less dogmatically; but some repeat obsolete rules, and nearly all ignore a matter of the first importance—the relation of pointing to the meaning of the paragraph. Instead of associating the use of points with the larger units, they have commonly given a series of rules with isolated sentences for examples. And too often the rules are rigid prescriptions which take insufficient account of permissible and useful alternatives. A strict rule which may be harmlessly applied to a sentence out of

action may conceal the fact that pointing varies according to meaning. As every passage has an individual structure and tone, questions of pointing are in a measure questions of art which must be settled by cases. A textbook can list the customary ways of handling typical groups, and even describe the effects of the different punctuation marks; but the pointing of a sentence in action is a special case which may have to be settled on the spot.

The relation between punctuation and the larger units of composition has been obscured by an innocent faith in syntax. The doctrine has been held that problems of pointing may be settled by a series of rules for sentences, main clauses, and minor subordinate units. "When in doubt as to what mark of punctuation to use," says a certain manual of punctuation, the reader "has but to determine the grammatical construction of the part of the sentence in question, then turn to the rule much the same as he would turn to a word in the dictionary."

The scheme is convenient and simple, but unsafe. A group like *of course* or *not by any means* may properly be set as a main clause or as a sentence. A participial phrase may happen to be best treated as if a main clause, a subordinate clause may take rank as a main clause or even as a sentence. There may be need of classroom rules to the contrary, but such rules are special and temporary. In good writing elliptical expressions are far from uncommon.

Punctuation is not a matter of mechanical correctness; it is an art. It is related to syntax, but of course for the sake of communication. It is kept within limits by usage, but within these limits is freely adaptable to circumstances. The sooner these facts are recognized, the sooner is there an end of perplexity about the "rules of punctuation." So far as they are a correct statement of what is customary and useful, they are valid. But so far as they are narrowly

mechanical, and so far as they induce rigidity of style, let us have done with them.

Current Works on Punctuation

Of the numerous works dealing with punctuation, it is necessary here to name only a few, and none more than twenty years old except the great nineteenth century authority, Wilson's *Treatise on English Punctuation.* Most of the current books and chapters are either secondary and misleading or else too restricted in purpose to require examination here. Aside from Wilson's *Treatise,* a thorough book which is still freely cited either directly or indirectly by most writers on punctuation, it is necessary to list only those recent books and articles which contain original matter or which give rules framed by competent authorities for the use of compositors and proofreaders. Such rules, though too rigid for authors who do their own pointing, are of course worthy of respect as opinions even when they cannot be accepted as binding laws. With regard to typographical design and to matters requiring uniformity, the standard printers' manuals are of course the best available authority.

The traditionally standard textbook is the *Treatise on English Punctuation* by John Wilson, an able and scholarly printer who died in 1868. The first edition of this work, based on an earlier and smaller book (1826), was issued in 1844. A second edition appeared in 1850, and more than thirty editions or reissues subsequently. The thirty-second edition now current is merely a reprint of the twentieth, which appeared in 1871, three years after the author's death.

Wilson's treatise is a careful and elaborate work, under constant revision during the author's lifetime, and worthy

of the great respect it has enjoyed. As recently as 1915 Mr. C. H. Ward (page 14 below) said of Wilson:

His supplementary exposition is always clear and thorough. He maintains (what custom later overruled, but has now returned to) that the second comma should be used in *John, James, and Harry.* He perceived that a comma ought not to be placed between a subject and its verb; and he is sustained by the best modern usage. He announces (though he cannot disregard the universal opinion of his day) that punctuation has for its primary function the displaying of grammatical structure. Verbose and tiresome he may be, but his system is complete and unimpeachable.

But despite its originality and thoroughness, Wilson's treatise is no longer a practical book. In both text and illustration it represents standards of practice which are in part obsolete. The following sentences from page 30 of the twenty-eighth edition illustrate the elaborate pointing used in the text of the book. The passage is an extreme case, but surprising even so.

In nouns, we think, the comma is usually required, to show that the terms, which might otherwise be regarded as significant of two ideas or things, are designed to represent only one and the same; but the pointing of adjectives and adverbs similarly situated would, in many cases, tend, by the breaking-up of the connection, to confuse, instead of assisting, the reader. Besides, it should be remembered that qualifying words are seldom, if ever, perfectly synonymous; and that, even if they were exactly of the same signification, the omission of the commas could scarcely affect the sense.

It is significant that in the first fifty sentences of Chapter I (the Introduction, straight matter with few extracts) there are 233 interior points in addition to the 50 terminal points—an average of 5.66 points per sentence. In modern

American newspaper editorials the average number per sentence, terminal points included, is well under 2.5. Even in books, which as a rule are more elaborately pointed than editorials, an average above 3 per sentence is exceptional. (See Table A, page 243 below.)

The division in Wilson's treatise is into "grammatical points" (comma, semicolon, colon, period), "grammatical and rhetorical points" (interrogation and exclamation points, marks of parenthesis, and dash), "letter, syllabic, and quotation points" (apostrophe, hyphen, quotation marks), and "miscellaneous marks," the last category including brackets, reference marks, and miscellaneous signs. Besides the chapters on the marks so classified, there is an introductory account of "the importance and uses of correct punctuation." Capitals, italic, abbreviations, and other typographical matters are included in an appendix.

"Rhetorical" is used with reference to delivery. In the chapter on Grammatical and Rhetorical Points Wilson says (page 153):

> In classifying these points as both grammatical and rhetorical, we mean to imply, not that those which have come under consideration afford no facilities in delivery, but that the Marks of Interrogation, Exclamation, and Parenthesis, and the Dash, have a more direct bearing on that art.

But in respect to "elocutionary pointing" Wilson was wiser than his generation. He says on page 17:

> But, on the whole, it will be found that the art of Punctuation is founded rather on grammar than on rhetoric; that its chief aim is to unfold the meaning of sentences, with the least trouble to the reader; and that it aids the delivery, only in so far as it tends to bring out the sense of the writer to the best advantage.

The more important recent books and articles on punctuation are as follows:

THEODORE L. DE VINNE. *Correct Composition.* (In a series of volumes with the general title *The Practice of Typography.*) The Century Company, New York, 1901; second edition, 1904.

Especially useful for information about quotations, white space, typographical design, hyphenation, and the rhetorical or artistic side of typography. The treatment of structural punctuation is brief, and is intended mainly for compositors. There is little discussion of options in the use of points.

As Mr. De Vinne was at once a scholar and a master printer, his briefly expressed opinions in regard to the rhetoric of punctuation are unusually competent authority.

T. F. and M. F. A. HUSBAND. *Punctuation: Its Principles and Practice.* George Routledge & Sons, London, 1905.

Part I contains an account of the history of punctuation and of the older books on the use of points. The arrangement of Part II, on modern punctuation, is by points rather than by functions. The authors have given a separate chapter to the period and two chapters to the comma, but have grouped together the interrogation and exclamation marks (Chapter VI), the semicolon and colon (Chapter IX), and the dash, marks of parenthesis, and inverted commas (Chapter X). Except for clearness, the rhetorical considerations applied to options in pointing receive inadequate notice.

WENDELL PHILLIPS GARRISON. *A Dissolving View of Punctuation.* Atlantic Monthly, August, 1906.

A discursive essay pointing out the alternative use of marks for parenthesis and other constructions. It does not attempt exhaustive treatment of any mark or any kind of structure.

J. D. LOGAN. *Quantitative Punctuation.* A New Practical Method Based on the Evolution of the Literary Sentence in Modern English Prose. Toronto, 1907.

Our method is founded on two facts—(1) that the English literary sentence has evolved virtually into the quantity and form of spoken English, and (2) that punctuation is essentially a function of the quantity of sentences.

The whole problem of punctuation resolves itself into formulating a simple body of rules for the use of the comma.

Elsewhere he says, despite his opinion regarding the "simple body of rules for the comma," that punctuation could be best taught "by ignoring all rules and by making punctuation a *function* of the *structure* (or quantity) of sentences."

I discovered that as the quantity (length) of the English literary sentence decreased, necessarily the number of points of punctuation underwent a change in nature and number, until in the best literature of to-day there seldom appear more than *three* points, namely, the comma, the period, and the mark of interrogation. This happens all because the structure of literary English to-day approximates to the quantity and form of spoken English. . . .

Mr. Logan banishes to an appendix the uses of the semicolon, colon, and dash; but in his own text he does not scruple to use the exclamation mark, colon and dash together, comma and dash together, and curves. The book is intended not as a record of usage but as a method "for practical purposes in a definitively practical age."

Mr. Logan is correct in his observation that pointing has felt the lightening of the English literary sentence. But punctuation is not a function of sentence quantity only; it is also a function of emphasis. For example, dashes are

sometimes used at places where structure does not ordinarily call for points of any kind; and there are numerous options which involve questions of emphasis.

The statement that in the best literature of today "there seldom appear more than three points, namely, the comma, the period, and the mark of interrogation" is misleading. Mr. Logan ignores the fact that question marks are usually outnumbered by both dashes and semicolons. It would not do to say that either dashes or semicolons are only "seldom" found in the writings of Miss Agnes Repplier, or Mr. Harvey of the *North American Review,* or Messrs. Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton, Irvin Cobb, Meredith Nicholson, Stuart P. Sherman, John Galsworthy, or the gentlemen who write editorials for the *Saturday Evening Post*—not a list of "best writers" but one which includes competent writers of several kinds. Temperateness in punctuation does not consist in avoiding the colon, the semicolon, the dash, or even the exclamation point. An average of more than three structural points per sentence in ordinary matter is exceptional; but the average is likely to contain eight or ten per cent of marks other than the three Mr. Logan mentions.

R. D. Miller. *Coordination and the Comma.* Publications of the Modern Language Association, vol. 23, 1908, pp. 316-328.

A competent account of the two-clause compound sentence with comma in nineteenth century English prose. Mr. Miller's distinction between "grammatical" and "logical" connectives is used in the section on the pointing of main clauses, Chapter IV below.

Percy Simpson. *Shakespearean Punctuation.* The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1911.

According to Mr. Simpson's thesis, the old system of pointing, as exemplified in the First Folio and in the 1609 text of the Sonnets, was not ignorant or haphazard, but flexible and mainly rhythmical. "The punctuation, which is usually regarded as the weakest point in the printing of the Folio, I believe to be on the whole sound and reasonable" (page 15).

For students of modern punctuation, as opposed to textual criticism, the chief point of interest is what Mr. Simpson says of the change from a free to a systematic and logical method.

> The fact is that English punctuation has radically changed in the last three hundred years. Modern punctuation is, or at any rate attempts to be, logical; the earlier system was mainly rhythmical. Rhetorical influence!

The difference is evident; but a safer statement would be that in modern practice the points are more distinctly specialized, are used more systematically in relation to syntactical divisions, and usually serve logical and rhythmical functions at the same time. Points are sometimes used today to mark interruption, hesitation, or special emphasis; but though most points in modern writing are intended for logical grouping, they have effects on movement, whatever the writer's intention.

It is clear, for example, that in cases of parenthesis commas do not suggest the same rhythmical effect as curves or dashes; that the compounding semicolon is not the same in effect as the comma, even when the comma may make the logical relation clear; that quote marks affect movement by emphasis and by suggesting a resemblance to syntactical breaks. Even the hyphen influences movement by effecting a shift of accent, as in some of Carlyle's

coinages. Modern pointing groups words for clearness and emphasis, with inevitable effect upon movement.

C. H. WARD. *"Punctator Gingriens"*: A Call to Arms. English Journal, September, 1915, pp. 451-457.

Mr. Ward's article is an admirable criticism of Wilson's *Treatise on Punctuation* and of its minor successors, the "sections" on punctuation which for most students and many teachers are unimpeached authority.

In the first place, where do we get our knowledge of punctuation? From school textbooks. Where did the writers get their knowledge? From earlier textbooks. If we follow up this cascade, what source do we reach? John Wilson's *Treatise* of 1871.

The twentieth edition of the *Treatise,* brought out three years after his death, is the great storehouse which every succeeding text-maker has pillaged without acknowledgment—often, no doubt, plundering at second or third hand, and so not even being aware whence his booty had originally come.

Part of Mr. Ward's comment on the quality of Wilson's work has been quoted on a previous page.

In Mr. Ward's view the best models of punctuation are to be found in editorial writing.

As for the weeklies, if you have never thought of them as fit guides in your aesthetic vocation, begin today to regard them as such. Their principles of pointing have been elaborated with a care, a wideness of information, a knowledge of typographic evolution, a love of propriety that mere teachers have no conception of. The men who formulate the system are most conservative; yet they have been eager to progress toward clearness; they have labored toward—and have all but achieved—uniformity.

Of certain textbooks for students Mr. Ward remarks:

A capital book issued in 1912, full of first-hand material, still announces that one of the uses of the semicolon is to introduce,

and that a comma is employed to show the omission of a word. Both uses are so hopelessly moribund that "authority" for them doesn't signify. Another manual, bearing three mighty names, requires a comma to separate a "long" subject from its verb—a pernicious principle and almost a dead one.

With regard to the influence of authors upon pointing, Mr. Ward's opinion is interesting but extreme.

Authors have never made the least contribution to the art. (Don't be offended by the rashness of such a sweeping negative. Ponder the statement calmly for several months before denying it.) No impression is more consistently conveyed by our *Compositions* than that we refer to literature for the standard of punctuation in the same way that we do for diction and syntax. "Some writers" do thus and so, we are told. What "some writers" do is not of the least importance. The vast majority of them are following as best they can a system that other authors never originated. If some of them do peculiar things, it is criminal to call the attention of secondary students to their oddities. That system has always been devised and amended, not by authors or professors, but by publishers.

It is quite true that punctuation is practically the creation of publishers. From Nicolas Jenson and Aldus Manutius to Joseph Moxon, from Moxon to Wilson and De Vinne, the greatest influence for conservatism and for progress has been exerted by printers and publishers. But is it certain that neither "authors nor professors" have had any influence at all? Is it publishers that have introduced suspension periods to the American public in novels, magazine articles, advertisements, and moving-picture screens? The influence of authors or professors has been felt in the obstinacy of certain obsessions, probably in the extended use of the dash, certainly in the use of the hyphen. De Vinne says of hyphenation (*Correct Composition*, p. 6 : "A

the changes begin with writers. Dictionary makers (Webster excepted) claim that they do not originate changes, and that they record only those that have been generally accepted."

Stripped of its universality, Mr. Ward's contention is right. So far as uniformity is in order, a working code for ordinary use should be based on the practice of good editors and publishers. But the possibilities of uniformity can easily be exaggerated. Though the pointing of an isolated two-clause sentence may be subjected to a fixed rule, the same words may be used in such context as to require quite different pointing. This matter will necessarily be mentioned repeatedly in subsequent chapters.

Concerning the value of proper instruction in punctuation, Mr. Ward speaks his mind emphatically:

> Any teacher who has labored systematically to teach the principles of punctuation, who has fought vigorously and waged war for years, knows that nothing else he can do produces a tithe of such fundamental benefit.

CONSTANCE M. ROURKE. *The Rationale of Punctuation.* Educational Review, vol. 50 (October, 1915), pp. 246ff.

A suggestive article in which emphasis is offered as the working principle of punctuation. Miss Rourke objects to the "is used" formula and to the custom of presenting punctuation by syntactical rules with detached sentences for illustration.

> The rules are given: the student must first memorize them. When he writes he must reduce the forms of his expression to their grammatical construction, and then punctuate or not according to their conformity to the types named in his text. The whole abstract process lies definitely apart from the natural creative expression which training in writing might be expected to cul-

tivate; its best success can only be a hardening of further practise within certain unusual forms.

His [the student's] final method in punctuation will be at once simpler and more complex than if he followed the present-day rhetorics. It will be simpler because instead of abstract, often obscure and ambiguous rules, he has in hand a working principle, that of emphasis, whose variations are likewise simple and natural. It will be more complex because he must always discover the changing demands of the ideas, facts, or feelings which he wishes to express; his pointing must be conditioned by the immediate and often complex substance of his meaning. He can never acquire a merely mechanical technique. But at least his problem will be single; he will be wholly concerned with expression itself. Punctuation will have become part of his creative medium.

S. A. LEONARD. *The Rationale of Punctuation: a Criticism.* Educational Review, vol. 51 (January, 1916), pp. 89-92.

In this answer to Miss Rourke's essay, Mr. Leonard correctly maintains that emphasis cannot be considered a sufficient guiding principle. In his view the dominant consideration is clearness. He says of punctuation:

Is not its principal purpose, then, fullest clearness: to obviate so far as possible any misreading of the sentence—to fulfil that aim which George Meredith beautifully states of a clear style, that it "may be read out currently at a first glance"?

It is obvious that clearness and emphasis may be separated in theory; they cannot be distinguished in practice. The view which insists on emphasis and the one which insists on clearness throw light on two sides of the same thing.

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON KLEIN. *Why We Punctuate; or, Reason versus Rule in the Use of Marks.* The Lancet Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1916.

A revision of a work ("By a Journalist") published in 1896 under the same quaint title. Mr. Klein emphasizes the grouping function of the punctuation marks, insists on reason rather than convention, and treats interrelated marks together. But these merits are counterbalanced by the use of puzzling examples, by a neglect of the relation between pointing and movement, by the use and recommendation of too many parenthetical commas, and by the recommendation of rigid rules for parenthetical commas, curves, and dashes. The rules for parenthetical points are based not on usage but on grammatical distinctions and on the "inherent meanings" of the marks. Mr. Klein is of the opinion that parenthetical matter "with grammatical connection" (established by preposition or conjunction) should be set off by commas ordinarily, by dashes when the writer "*dashes* off the track of his thought for a moment." Groups without grammatical connection he calls "purely parenthetical" matter, to be enclosed in curves. The rule is too rigid. Matter purely parenthetical according to Mr. Klein's definition may be enclosed in curves, dashes, or commas; sometimes not pointed at all. (For the pointing of parenthetical elements see pages 102ff. below.)

University of Chicago Press. *Manual of Style,* fifth edition. Chicago, 1917.

A reference book of great value, especially for information regarding capitalization, division of words, compound words, italic, and other typographical matters. Punctuation is treated not rhetorically but in legislative fashion, with prescriptions for average cases. With a few exceptions, the rules are applied by the University of Chicago Press "with a certain degree of elasticity."

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF PUNCTUATION

PUNCTUATION is defined in the New English Dictionary as "the practice, art, method, or system of inserting points or 'stops' to aid the sense in writing or printing; division of written or printed matter into sentences, clauses, etc., by means of points or stops."

The use of the term to mean a punctuation mark is practically obsolete; and punctuation in the rare sense of observing stops with the voice is aside from the present purpose. Punctuation marks are meant for the eye. Though they may convey suggestions of intonation and vocal pauses, that is not their usual purpose. Their suggestion to the "inner ear" is more difficult than important to estimate.

The list of punctuation marks is sometimes held, as in Webster's New International Dictionary (Appendix XX), to include not only the usual series of marks but also the accents, the dieresis, the cedilla, the caret, the brace, the asterism (⁂ or ⁂), and the obsolescent series of reference marks beginning with the asterisk.

There will be no attempt in this book, however, to deal with all of these marks. The paragraph sign requires only bare mention, and there need be no further mention of the caret, the brace, ditto marks, leaders, or the asterism. The accent and quantity marks will be omitted, except that the dieresis will require mention as an alternative to the hyphen in certain words. Reference marks will be included only for brief treatment. Otherwise the discussion will be

limited almost exclusively to the following marks: period (with group of periods), interrogation point, exclamation point, colon, semicolon, comma, dash (of whatever length), curves, brackets, quotation marks, division hyphen, compounding hyphen, and apostrophe.

Attention will be directed to the use of these marks in recent English prose written primarily for silent reading, and to body matter, as opposed to title-pages, headings of all kinds, legends, inscriptions, and display matter in general. Liturgical, oratorical, and of course mathematical pointing are entirely apart from the present purpose.

Paragraphing and the use of capitals and italic are not punctuation in the customary sense; but they serve purposes in large degree similar to those of punctuation marks. The paragraph is a sort of super-punctuation, and capitals, like italic, are an indication of grouping or meaning. They will therefore be included. Italic and capitals are sometimes alternative with quotation marks; and the paragraph will require frequent mention in relation to sentence division and to movement and emphasis. The relation of punctuation to the paragraph has been surprisingly neglected by textbook writers.

The Nature of Punctuation

Punctuation marks are signs which indicate the relation and character of the words which they precede, enclose, or terminate. When properly and not mechanically employed they convey the writer's meaning—so far as it is not given by words and display—as clearly and economically as possible, with the right kind of movement and the proper distribution of emphasis.

In tables, title-pages, or formal invitations, grouping may be effected by the division into lines, with various kinds of

indention; but display composition is apart from the matter in hand.

Points inaccurately used are likely to obscure the grouping, to falsify emphasis, or at any rate to be stilted and clumsy. What is worse, unsuitable marks may betray incompetence, or ignorance of convention, or even rhetorical vanity.

Punctuation marks when properly used are not intended to be noticed for themselves. Their purpose is to show at a glance the relation, the relative weights, or the nature of the words they set off. If a point attracts attention to itself, this is usually because there is something wrong in punctuation or in structure.

Punctuation marks do not determine thought, or take the place of thought; yet by virtue of certain familiar customs and expectations they enable the writer to effect what would otherwise be difficult. They save transition words, as when they make it unnecessary to say "this is quoted," "this is parenthetical," "the next clause is coordinate with the one just gone over," "the following words are to receive special notice." Skilfully employed, they often indicate what could not otherwise be managed save at the cost of wordy formality. A pair of curves may say, "Of course you, if not the general run of my readers, know this already." A set of quote marks enclosing a word may be interpreted to mean, "I am too refined to let this pass as my own; it is smoking-room slang." By showing what is interrogative, or logically subordinate, or ironical, or by marking different degrees of emphasis—usually at the same time that they indicate grouping—punctuation marks are a useful aid to clearness. The ordinary uses of the points are so familiar that certain effects and economies are practically conditioned on the use of the customary signals.

Marks rightly used keep the reader from confusing ad-

jacent groups, and from the annoyance of having to retrace his steps. When misused they indicate false boundaries; or by their association with certain structural forms they suggest weights of emphasis which are not intended.

Obvious as it would seem that, to man ships, officers and men are necessary, it has been the habit of successive Congresses to ignore this fact.

The reader learns too late that *ships, officers and men* is not a series. The sentence requires not repointing but reconstruction. The following sentence is bad because the main break, after *experiment,* is open, and the parenthetical group so pointed as to make it momentarily appear that the main break comes after *but.*

It is a bold experiment but, taken by and large, it is not a success.—The *Dial,* Feb. 14, 1918.

John Muir accompanied this searching party and his private journals, letters published at the time in the San Francisco "Bulletin," and his contributions to the government reports of the Corwin's explorations have been skilfully woven by the editor into a connected narrative of the summer's cruise amidst the ice-floes, fogs, and storms of these little known seas.—The *Dial,* Feb. 14, 1918.

The pointing is bad, the structure haphazard; given this wording, heavy punctuation is necessary to clearness. In the following sentence the semicolon suggests the beginning of a new main clause.

Then there was an investigation, some indictments; and an ordinance designed to prevent similar impositions on the public in the future.

As a general though not invariable rule, punctuation marks do not separate sentence-elements which are so

closely related as subject and verb, verb and direct object, or noun and necessary modifier. An apparent exception is the use of marks where matter to be separately grouped intervenes between elements ordinarily phrased together. In the following sentence the points help the reader to bridge the gap between subject and verb by marking the infinitive phrase as parenthetical and thereby letting it be seen that the remaining words are in natural sequence, continuous save for the intervening parenthesis.

A reporter, to tell the plain truth, cannot afford to be above his work or "above his job," as the New York newsgatherers say.—John L. Given, *Making a Newspaper,* p. 185.

What Punctuation Is Not

Punctuation is far from being a mere mechanical device. It is mechanical as a matter of course, like word-spacing or the use of initial capitals; but punctuation is much more than that. It is an integral part of written composition. The pointing must fit the words. What is equally important, words must often be so economized or managed that grouping marks will not be required too often or at inconvenient places. Often the only way to avoid awkward pointing is to revise the phrasing.

It is a commonplace, but one which requires repeating, that punctuation is not a panacea for bad composition. Points may reveal the meaning of a badly constructed sentence, but in that case they will also reveal the badness of the structure. The remedy for faulty structure is revision.

Structural, Editorial, and Word Pointing

In general, the name structural pointing may conveniently be given to the use of sentence points, comma, semi-

colon, colon, curves, and the dash, except the en dash and ellipsis dashes. Quote marks, brackets, and ellipsis dots and asterisks may be called editorial points. The apostrophe, the abbreviation period, hyphens, the en dash, and the ellipsis dash may be classified as etymological or word points. Non-structural points, especially quotes or brackets, may give the effect of structural grouping, but as a rule the distinctions are clear. The structural points are far less subject to rule than editorial or word points. They are more difficult, and for both meaning and emphasis are usually more important.

"Grammatical" and "Rhetorical" Points

The inaccurate and misleading classification of punctuation marks into grammatical and rhetorical points, or into grammatical and grammatical-rhetorical, is still current.

The New Standard Dictionary distinguishes grammatical, rhetorical, and etymological punctuation, and punctuation for reference.

Webster's New International Dictionary says that "Punctuation is chiefly done with four points" (period, colon, semicolon, and comma), and describes the other points (interrogation, exclamation, parentheses, dash, and brackets) as being "partly rhetorical and partly grammatical."

The Century Dictionary distinguishes "the points used for punctuation exclusively" (period, colon, semicolon, comma) from those that "serve also for punctuation in the place of one or another of these, while having a special rhetorical effect of their own" (interrogation and exclamation points). The dash is said to be "also used, either alone or in conjunction with one of the preceding marks, in some cases where the sense or the nature of the pause

required can thereby be more clearly indicated." The obvious objections to the Century's account of the matter are (1) that the colon and the semicolon have a no less "special rhetorical effect" than the interrogation and exclamation points, (2) that the period, colon, semicolon, and comma are used no more "exclusively for punctuation" than the other points. That the question and exclamation marks are stronger than certain other marks is quite irrelevant to the classification.

The fundamental truth is that *all structural punctuation marks in straight reading matter are rhetorical points, because they are at once grouping points and (intentionally or otherwise) emphasis points, with effects on movement.*

Definitions of *rhetoric* and *rhetorical* for the present purpose necessarily include the mechanics of writing. The definitions are given in terms of printing, but will apply to manuscript without essential change. The principal difference is that in printing a higher mechanical excellence is expected.

As defined for printed matter, *rhetoric is the art of communication by means of printed lexicological units (commonly called words and word-groups), with the incidental aid of white space, symbols, and other mechanical devices such as the use of different type faces, of color, rules, borders, decorations, and of initial and other capitals.* It is necessary to take into account even the kind of paper, the size and kind of text type, the presswork, the binding, and design.

An important though imponderable element of prestige is conveyed by the names of the author, the publisher, and sometimes of the printer. Prestige is necessarily a variable element, subject to continual alteration.

Communication means the process of imparting information, or giving pleasure, or inducing some one to share a

feeling or pursue a certain course of action—any or all of these, as the writer may desire.

White space includes the spacing of symbols, words, sentences, even letters at times; the spacing (or "leading") of lines; paragraph and other indentions, space left at paragraph ends, and extra space sometimes left between paragraphs; space to the right and left of centered lines; and blank or partly blank pages. The rhetorical value of white space—a matter clearer to printers than to most teachers and writers—appears by absence when words are unspaced, when the page is crowded to the edges, or when matter which ought to be in half a dozen paragraphs is set as an unbroken phalanx paragraph. White space judiciously employed makes communication easier and more pleasurable. It is for this reason that publishers use so much paper for well-proportioned margins, and that advertisers pay heavily for space which they do not fill with words. White space may be considered in three aspects: as a removal of obstructions, so that the reader may read; as a means of indicating transitions, e. g. from paragraph to paragraph; and as an important element in typographical design.

Symbols are arbitrarily taken here to exclude complete words used in their ordinary logical sense, and to include chapter and section numbers, letters or numbers in formal lists, arbitrary marks of all kinds not otherwise included, the paragraph sign (rarely employed in text matter), reference signs (superior figures, superior letters, etc.), and punctuation marks.

Rhetorical means aiding or defeating in whatever degree any of the aesthetic or practical aims of writing. More specifically, it means aiding or hindering communication in respect to clearness, economy, ease, agreeableness, force, persuasiveness, or whatever may be desired. A rhetorical

use of a point is simply an instrumental use; instinctive perhaps, but in its degree effective, whether for or against any of the purposes of writing.

In some formal uses the rhetorical effect of a point may be practically nil, as where points are used at line-ends in the superscription of a letter. But points in text matter are properly and usually rhetorical, for good or evil, by exhibiting grouping, relations, character, and relative weights.

To be sure, there are survivals of unnecessary points under the influence of customs which have lost their utility; but even in such cases there is some offense to taste. A typical case of the kind is the use of the comma with dashes which would do as well alone; another is the use of the dash with a colon (e. g. after a "Dear Sir" or before a quotation) where the colon is entirely competent for the work. Though the effect of such excrescences may be negligible to most readers, it would be better art to get rid of them. The *Manual of Style* of the University of Chicago Press says that ordinarily the dash should not be used in combination with other points—a typical piece of evidence that such cases are not matters of indifference.

No one would attempt to deny that marks are often improperly used by writers who in other respects are competent craftsmen; or that many writers leave much of their pointing to secretaries and printers; or that many readers are insensitive to punctuation. It might even be proved that some people are rather proud of being ignorant of punctuation, just as certain persons feel themselves superior by virtue of their cryptic handwriting. These are data for the sociologist; they are no proof that punctuation marks are not rhetorical.

The art of communication through printed matter includes not merely the writer's words but also the mechanics

of presentation, in which punctuation has an important part. But there still lingers the delusion—with a sufficient admixture of truth to keep it alive—that punctuation may be merely "grammatical."

If it is to be held that a point is grammatical without being rhetorical, it is necessary to divorce grammar from thought and to make rhetorical include only the unusual or highly emphatic. Points are rhetorical because they are instrumental; because when properly used they help to make writing intelligible and otherwise effective.

It is true that some marks are more emphatic than others, and it is true that pointing does not always correspond to syntactical relations; but a comma is no less strictly rhetorical than a dash or exclamation point. A comma in reading matter is a rhetorical instrument, or an obstruction.

The **interrogation** and **exclamation points** are admittedly rhetorical; but since the other marks have been denied the possession of rhetorical character, it is necessary to put them under examination. If they aid or hinder the aims of communication in any degree whatsoever, they are rhetorical.

The **terminal period** is rhetorical because it announces that any following matter is a new sentence—an assertion, exclamation, question, or injunction, or an expression (like *Of course,* or *Indeed?* or *Yes*) which is given the formal rank ordinarily reserved to the full sentence. The period marks the boundary between fact A and fact B; or it may indicate that the preceding group belongs to the whole paragraph rather than to one of the constituent subtopics. The rhetorical nature of the period is perhaps best seen in the use of short sentences for sharp emphasis in the neighborhood of longer sentences. A common misuse of the period, and one which displays its rhetorical nature, is the

pointing of several successive predications in such a way as to give them equal formal rank, irrespective of their relative value, as if each remark were a jewel of wisdom worthy to be set as a solitaire.

The colon in its ordinary use, as introducing a quotation or list, is rhetorical because it indicates grouping and at the same time serves as a formal emphasis mark, as when it ends an introduction and emphatically calls attention to whatever may follow.

The semicolon is rhetorical like the other marks. It may aid clearness by marking an antithesis or by managing a swift passage from one statement to another without the agency of a link-word. It may also make the grouping clear by indicating the larger breaks where the lesser breaks are pointed with commas, as in lists of names with addresses.

The comma is usually the lightest point of the series; but its rhetorical character is evident. It may make all the difference between clearness and obscurity; if used too often it may make writing formal, absurd, or unintelligible. "The great enemies to understanding anything printed in our language," says Henry Alford in *The Queen's English*, "are the commas." As a matter of course he means unnecessary commas.

The ordinary em dash and the **long dash** are clearly rhetorical. They mark interrupted or broken sentences, changes of tack, emphatic apposition, or emphatic parenthesis. The **en dash**, as in the expression *pages 38–55*, is much like the hyphen in effect.

Curves enclose parenthetical matter (dates, page references, explanations) for more or less rapid notice as not formally structural. The use of curves may degenerate into a mannerism, with injurious effects on both tone and movement.

Brackets ordinarily enclose editorial matter interpolated in quotations. They are rhetorical because an instrument of communication. They say to the reader, "Here are the boundaries of an interpolation."

Even **quote marks** are rhetorical. Words enclosed in quote marks are more emphatic than open words, the quotes having a suspensive effect resembling that of structural points. Quote marks may give excessive emphasis, may check movement awkwardly, may give an air of self-consciousness. The use of quote marks in admiration of one's own learning or literary skill is perhaps the worst display of bad taste which punctuation marks permit.

It is often better to cite in substance than directly, or else to maneuver sentences so as to make the quote mark come at a sentence or clause break. A quote mark introduced where the syntax is continuous may be awkward.

> Matthew Arnold defined "the modern element in literature" as the ability to render an adequate interpretation of the various activities of modern life, "to see life steadily, and to see it whole."

The second quoted group is better managed than the first.

Even word points are rhetorical, though so much under the control of orthographic rules as sometimes to be almost purely formal in use.

The **apostrophe** aids clearness by marking words as genitives or contractions. And though the meaning may be clear without the apostrophe in a given case, the omission may be annoying—as to some readers of Mr. Bernard Shaw's prefaces, where *don't* and *people's* appear sometimes as *dont* and *peoples*. There is so much respect for orthography among readers, both learned and otherwise, that even apostrophes may count in the total effect. The omission of a customary apostrophe is likely to be noticed, and attributed to eccentricity or ignorance.

The **abbreviation period** is rhetorical so far as useful for clearness and for avoidance of orthographical offense. As between *per cent* and *per cent.* (both forms in good current use) there may be no rhetorical difference except to persons observant of printing styles. But alternation between the two forms in a single book would be a disgrace to the printer.

The **compounding hyphen,** as in extemporaneous or half-united compounds, is useful for clearness. *Horse whipped by angry woman* is obscure; *horse-whipped by angry woman* is clear. As between hyphened and solid compounds (like *proof-reader* and *proofreader*) there is much latitude of good use. There may be little or no difference of effect save on the ground of consistency.

Even the **division hyphen** is rhetorical, though seldom by intention. Witness the printers' rules against numerous divisions and against syllable-splitting (like *dy-eing* or *des-ign*) which may puzzle the reader even momentarily. Authors cannot make provision against line-breaks; in this as in certain other typographical matters they depend on the printer.

The punctuation marks, when considered with reference to the forms and relations which they exhibit or suggest, are all of them rhetorical, in the nature of the case, by design or by inadvertence. To treat them as merely mechanical, or to imagine that the use of points can always be reduced to categorical correctness, is to misconceive their nature and utility.

The rhetorical nature of the marks must be insisted on, because the grammatical viewpoint—legitimate in itself—has laid emphasis upon formal syntax rather than upon communication. The field of syntax is the sentence, and the sentence has in practice been the field of discussion for the "rules of punctuation." But questions of punctuation

frequently require decision on grounds of utility in the paragraph.

The following words, if dragged out of their context, may be punctuated "correctly" in either of these ways:

Their hobbies do not spread desolation over the social world. Their prejudices do not insult our intelligence.

Their hobbies do not spread desolation over the social world; their prejudices do not insult our intelligence.

But the passage (from Miss Agnes Repplier's *Americans and Others,* page 161) is and ought to be differently pointed. Written as two sentences, or as one sentence with semicolon, the two predications as parts of the paragraph would be misrepresented.

There are men and women—not many—who have the happy art of making their most fervent convictions endurable. Their hobbies do not spread desolation over the social world, their prejudices do not insult our intelligence. They may be so "abreast with the times" that we cannot keep track of them, or they may be basking serenely in some Early Victorian close. They may believe buoyantly in the Baconian cipher, or in thought transference, or in the serious purposes of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, or in anything else which invites credulity. They may even express their views, and still be loved and cherished by their friends.

There might be a number of changes in punctuation under the customary rules, if the sentences of this paragraph were isolated; but such experiments would be like anatomical experiments to determine a question of physiology. However useful for supplementary purposes, they might omit certain essential data. The considerations pertinent to the case will be treated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEMS OF PUNCTUATION

THE problem in every question of punctuation is twofold. The writer must keep within the limits of safety set by convention and consequent expectation. At the same time, in the same act of writing, he has to employ the marks in organic relation to thought and form, with reference to the mechanical and human conditions of the case. Certain mechanical conditions which may have to be considered are paragraph length, division into lines, and the office styles of individual publishers. Among the human conditions are the expected class of readers, the tone and manner suitable to the occasion, and the probable conditions of reading.

The options permitted by current usage, with the considerations of choice, will be treated in the following chapters under such heads as Sentence Pointing, Compounding, and Series Pointing. Meantime it is necessary to notice certain general considerations. These may be reduced to convention and utility.

CONVENTION IN PUNCTUATION

Convention in the use of marks is not absolutely fixed, but so far as definite it can be ignored only at peril. A writer does well to keep safely within convention because points used in their customary way do their proper work instead of attracting attention to themselves, and because

systematic punctuation, where uniformity matters, will help to convey the impression that the writer knows his own mind.

Conventions may be widespread, like the venerable rule that a sentence shall end with a full stop. On the other hand they may be local or special. Practice may vary even within a single office, as when styles for law printing differ from those applied to miscellaneous work.

Office or private conventions save time and prevent uncertainty. It is well, for example, to decide the order of punctuation marks which occur together, the pointing to be used before quotations formally introduced, the kind and number of points for ellipsis, and the pointing of a series such as *came, saw, and conquered.* In such matters and also in the setting of side-heads, credits, and book titles, consistency is necessary.

Temporary or local restrictions are sometimes imposed for a special purpose, as when school children are forbidden to begin a sentence with *but* or *and*, or to write as a sentence anything less than a full sentence with subject and predicate. Such restrictions may be usefully imposed long enough to make the pupil learn the nature of the sentence, provided he knows that the restriction is temporary. In like manner newspaper reporters may be forbidden to use curves for certain purposes or to make any use of antithetical semicolons.

But convention is less definite than students have been led to suppose, especially with regard to structural punctuation. The pointing of a given sentence may have to be determined in the light of an entire paragraph or longer passage.

To name only one case, a parenthetical element within a sentence may be open, or may be pointed in a variety of ways—with commas, dashes, commas and dashes together,

curves, or brackets. And this wide range of choice—of course limited narrowly in some cases—is typical of the conditions which make punctuation a matter of intelligence.

Neither rule nor logic determines all questions of pointing. In the writings of the editorial gentlemen who are supposed to have "all but achieved uniformity" in pointing, preliminary expressions of similar length and form are sometimes open, sometimes pointed. The end of a series modifying a following word may be pointed or open. Clause breaks in sentences of equal length are pointed differently according to circumstances. Modern pointing is logically consistent only by comparison with the older pointing. Where obedience to a custom stands in the way of good movement and is not an aid to clearness, the custom goes by the board.

For this reason a printer's office styles, if mechanically applied without reference to varying circumstances, may be tyrannical. One writer on punctuation has lamented that "the publishing house has its system of pointing, from which only eternal vigilance can protect the intelligent writer." The careless writer deserves comparatively small consideration; in fact he may need to be saved from himself. But the systematic and accurate writer is entitled to whatever liberty of pointing his meaning may require. According to Mr. De Vinne (*Correct Composition*, p. 243), "it is the author's right to use his own system, and the compositor must neither make nor suggest any change. If the proof-reader thinks that the author's system of pointing will confuse the reader, he may (but it requires tact to do so) invite the attention of the author to its vagueness. There his duty ends. He must accept the author's decision. Meddling with an educated author's punctuation is always injudicious, and may be regarded as impertinent."

Most problems of punctuation, aside from the easy one

of finding what is permissible, may be reduced to questions of (1) clearness, (2) management of emphasis, and (3) movement, including economy and variety.

The Consideration of Clearness

The use of punctuation marks for clearness cannot be separated from their use for rhetorical purposes in general. Clearness, movement, variety, and persuasiveness are inextricably related. But as a matter of convenience the relation of points to clearness may be momentarily isolated.

Punctuation marks when intelligently used show grouping and relations. Loose parentheses or elements clearly non-restrictive may be best understood if pointed off. On the other hand, elements closely related for definition or structure are usually grouped together, not separated by a punctuation mark. Between subject and verb, verb and object, preposition and object, verb and complement, or noun and necessary modifier, punctuation is usually objectionable, unless to set off intervening matter. In the first of the sentences following, commas make the grouping clear. The comma in the second is an obstruction.

Thomas Day, the author of the *History of Sandford and Merton,* was an eccentric philanthropist.

To save a considerable part of one's income, is ordinarily both wisdom and duty.

Sometimes a point is needed to prevent an awkward hitch.

When he fired, the bullet struck square into the mark.

I took it, for I had no option.

Six months before I had seen that same region white with snow, yet blazing with death.

In the first of these sentences the comma makes it clear that *bullet* is not the object of *fired* but the subject of *struck*. In the second, the comma shows instantly that *for* is not a preposition but a clause link. In the third, which needs a point after *Six months before,* the grouping is not clear.

But it may happen in such cases that the form of the sentence should be changed so as to make pointing unnecessary, and in order to make the meaning safe against the reader. In the classic case of the telegram "No. Price too high," which was delivered in the form "No price too high," with expensive results, the pointing made a difference so vital that nobody except by gross miscalculation would trust his meaning to such a form, points or no points. Telegrams as now delivered are commonly typewritten in capitals without points, or with the names of the points written as words.

When correcting in manuscript or type is difficult for lack of time, a direct style with little pointing is desirable. Otherwise the compositor may ruin the effect or obscure the meaning.

The Consideration of Emphasis

Questions of punctuation are in large measure questions of emphasis. This is not because points are often used for emphasis alone, but because grouping-points suggest certain relations and roughly suggest certain weights of emphasis. The semicolon is a coordinating point, effecting an approximately equal distribution of emphasis; parenthetical dashes are more emphatic than parenthetical commas; the anticipatory colon throws the weight of emphasis upon following matter. As a matter of course, the effect of a point may be aided or may be countered by the effect of wording. So far as pointing is concerned, clauses separated by a semicolon are of equal weight; but position or length may make more difference than pointing.

The problem, not always simple, is to stamp everything with its exact value. If a group not worth being displayed as a sentence is so displayed, it is overemphasized. If a relative clause which ought to be rapidly passed over is so worded as to require commas, it is overemphasized. If a point required for clear grouping is rhetorically inconvenient, the chances are that something is awkwardly emphasized. In this case the next step is to revise.

In the following sentence the words *except sentimentality* might be left open, but with different effect. The grouping and movement would be different, and *except sentimentality* would be lighter.

> The schools have abandoned the rod as a promoter of educational efficiency, but they have put nothing, except sentimentality, in its place.—E. J. Swift, *Youth and the Race*, p. 38.

Except sentimentality is formally unnecessary or parenthetical; actually it is more emphatic than if an open restrictive group. The pointing also gives additional weight to the group *they have put nothing.*

Other things equal, the strength of a point in emphasizing juxtaposed matter will depend partly on the conventional rating of the mark, partly on the pointing of the whole passage in question. Within the limits of a single sentence a semicolon is superior to the comma and usually inferior to the colon. The comma is ordinarily outranked by the dash. Among full stops the less frequent question and exclamation marks commonly outweigh the more frequent period; in the case of parenthetical points, both curves and dashes usually outrank the comma. But if a writer makes extravagant use of the stronger or less common points, the reader learns to take them more calmly than under normal conditions.

For purposes of emphasis a full stop on page 1 does not necessarily outrank a dash or semicolon on page 2, though the full stop is theoretically superior. A comma misused may get more attention than a semicolon in due place. A pair of curves enclosing a page reference for rapid notice—as if to say, "Here it is if you want it"—will be the lightest marks because the best. But a pair of curves may enclose a remark which though formally parenthetical is actually important. In the following sentence the parenthetical or afterthought group in curves is actually the most emphatic part of the sentence.

Be like the Greeks, is the sum of M. France's message; since all is illusion and truth escapes us, let us pursue beauty (he should have said, be like certain Greeks, especially certain Greek sophists).—Irving Babbitt, *Masters of Modern French Criticism*, p. 320.

Emphasis may vary in kind or direction. There is emphasis by sharpness and surprise, and emphasis by weight of detail or by suspension. The last sentence of the following paragraph has at once abrupt emphasis and the concentrated weight of the preceding sentences.

There is a word, a "name of fear," which rouses terror in the heart of the vast educated majority of the English-speaking race. The most valiant will fly at the mere utterance of that word. The most broad-minded will put their backs up against it. The most rash will not dare to affront it. I myself have seen it empty buildings that had been full; and I know that it will scatter a crowd more quickly than a hose-pipe, hornets, or the rumour of plague. Even to murmur it is to incur solitude, probably disdain, and possibly starvation, as historical examples show. The word is "poetry."—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste*, page 71.

By means of suspension, commas and dashes aiding in the effect, the latter part of the following sentence is given concentrated emphasis:

While the growth of advertising has been exceedingly rapid, accompanied by a proportionate increase of expenditure, and while vast sums have been spent in securing the best in advertising copy, the question of the presentation of this copy—the typography of the advertisement—has been to a great extent neglected.—F. J. Trezise, *The Typography of Advertisements*, Preface.

The anticipatory colon ordinarily checks movement in order to call attention to what follows, whereas the semicolon when used as a balancing point in a two-clause sentence emphasizes the parts about equally.

But if there is any sincerity in Mr. [George] Moore's personal writings, we may be sure that, if called upon, he would moralize the tale in some such fashion as this: Don't go in for the fast life if you haven't the stamina to stand the pace.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature*, p. 135.

He feasts because life is not joyful; he revels because he is not glad.—G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*, p. 111.

Our modern politicians claim the colossal license of Caesar and the Superman, claim that they are too practical to be pure and too patriotic to be moral; but the upshot of it all is that a mediocrity is Chancellor of the Exchequer.—*Ib.*, p. 19.

So far as pointing is concerned, emphasis is evenly distributed by the semicolons in the last two examples; but the length and position of parts contribute to the effect.

The Consideration of Movement

Both clearness and emphasis are inextricably united with the complex and highly important effect called movement.

Movement in written prose may mean in the first place the progress of thought to a given end, with suggestion, information, entertainment, or persuasion by the way. If attention is directed to design and style, as theoretically isolated from thought, movement may mean the sum total of accents, pauses, suggested intonation, and suggested tone-color, together with the various means of emphasis. Proportion, balance, suspension, parallelism, capitals, white space, punctuation marks—all these, and probably more than these, will enter into the effect.

The importance of good movement—that is, good for the immediate purpose—is evident. As a rule, style ought to be straightforward. Though interruptions and asides are often permissible, even necessary, they justify themselves only by helping the reader to understand as he proceeds. Unnecessary points or points made necessary by bad structure are likely to be obstructions. The following sentence from Mr. Arnold Bennett (*The Price of Love*, p. 87) is an illustration of one of the ways in which pointing may affect movement.

> An aunt, Reuben, senior's, sister—it appeared—had died several years earlier; since when Rachel had alone kept house for her brother and her father.

Mr. Bennett's style and pointing are seldom of this sort.

The movement of a given piece of prose when read silently will depend on two factors, the reader and the prose. Rate of reading, checks and accelerations, the length of pauses, and variations of attention depend on the reader's interests and associations, and upon whatever else may happen to be in the stream of consciousness. What he will notice and with what degrees of attention will depend to some extent on changing conditions. With regard to punctuation marks, it is certain that some readers

are indifferent so long as they understand the words, while others feel a wrong or unnecessary mark as an annoyance.

The second factor in movement is the nature of the written prose. Some of the features which affect movement are choice of words, length and structure of paragraphs and sentences, alliteration and assonance, italic, capitals, footnote interruptions, and punctuation marks. Even such mechanical conditions as line length, type faces, white space, illustrations and borders, paper, and binding have something to do with the speed and satisfaction of reading.

Some of the places where one would pause in speaking are not pointed, and some punctuation marks serve their purpose without any determinate vocal effect. To what extent marks check one who is reading to himself there is no way of determining; only it is certain that points which exhibit meaning with true emphasis enable the reader to proceed more rapidly and pleasurably. If a point or the omission of a point makes for obscurity, or if a strong point is used where a light one would be better, there is likely to be a hitch in the movement. Movement may be disagreeably affected by any point that gives an impression of monotony, overemphasis, or self-consciousness.

So far as pointing is concerned, emphasis and movement are correlative. Checking or altering the movement by a period makes both the preceding and following words more emphatic than they would be if a comma were used. The period does not necessarily mean a longer pause; it shows a different relation.

These men make mistakes, but they do not repeat their mistakes.

These men make mistakes. But they do not repeat their mistakes.

Or the semicolon might be used with still a third effect. The parts would be less sharply emphatic than in the second form, with emphasis upon the twofold antithetical statement rather than upon the parts. All three are correct; the choice will depend upon the context.

The same relation of emphasis and movement appears in the use of series points, suspension and interruption points, parenthetical points, even quote marks. Every point used for grouping has some effect on the movement of its passage. A passage may be halting or swift, quiet or violent, direct or circuitous. It may "read well" or otherwise; and the least analytical reader is likely to feel the effect of intervals and emphasis, whatever the nature of the composition.

The problem of punctuation in text matter is to employ words, points, and paragraph breaks in such a way as to achieve at the same time clearness, proper distribution of emphasis, and the desired kind of movement. The negative side of the matter is the avoidance of obscurity, monotony, false emphasis, ill-timed formality, and clumsiness of all kinds.

Semiramis built Babylon; Dido, Carthage.

There are three roads which commonly lead to want and wretchedness; namely, idleness, intemperance, and crime.

These are given in manuals of punctuation without warning, as examples of good punctuation.

The following sentences show what pointing can do for cadence:

Such is the direction, such the object, toward which the Somme "Drang nach Osten"—to steal a good phrase from the Germans —tends.

A work of art, especially if the art be in literary form, affects us, primarily, emotionally.

If the latter sentence affects the reader "primarily, emotionally," the emotion is unsympathetic.

It is significant that the success of a parody depends largely on the accuracy with which it produces the intervals and emphasis—and the punctuation—of the original. The typographical abominations entitled *Molly Make-Believe* and *The Sick-a-Bed Lady* could not well be parodied without liberal use of hyphens, exclamation marks, and dashes of at least two lengths. They illustrate what Mrs. Malaprop may have meant by "female punctuation."

Design in Punctuation

It is obvious that the first impression of a page is gained from the design rather than the wording. Says Mr. E. A. Batchelder, in his *Principles of Design:*

> We have to judge the personality of many men by the letters they write. . . . It is disagreeable to have a man shout at our ears—or at our eyes either. Be satisfied with a simple, well-spaced heading. Then think carefully of the body of the letter; watch the margins and allow a bit of silence all about the writing. See that the whole, as a page, is well spaced and properly balanced.

The appearance of a printed page depends mainly on the distribution and proportion of white space; and punctuation marks contribute to the effect by their influence upon the alternation of black and white. It is partly on grounds of design that there is objection to numerous hyphen breaks, to the use of the asterisk-index series of reference marks in place of superior figures, and to certain combinations of points. Design is of particular importance in relation to quote marks. It is for the sake of appearance that the comma and the period precede the final double

quote according to the practice of most offices, even when the meaning would suggest the reverse order.

The setting of punctuation marks in the same font of type with what precedes—roman with roman or italic with italic—is required for both consistency and good design.

Questions of visual effect cannot always be separated from questions of economy and clearness. An elaborate succession of points may be at the same time unpleasing to the eye and puzzling or labored.

Economy in Punctuation

Modern preference favors the use of the fewest and least obtrusive marks that will do the required work. As a matter of course, each question of punctuation is to be settled on the merits of the case. If a semicolon will serve better than a comma to make clear the meaning and value of a pair of clauses, the semicolon is in a sense lighter, because it saves confusion. Economy consists not in denying one's self the use of semicolons or exclamation points, but rather in the use of the points most suitable to the immediate purpose.

The consideration of economy will often suggest the use of single points where older usage preferred and present usage permits two points. If a dash will do the same work as a dash and comma together, the dash alone is better. For a similar reason, a light point that will do as well as a stronger point is preferable.

Economy of pointing is conditioned upon directness of style. The small number of points in the average good sentence today may be explained partly by the avoidance of structure which would call for numerous parenthetical or series points.

An elaborate style like Pater's will require much punc-

tuation even when Pater is writing about sentences that need no punctuation.

> Say what you have to say, what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no surplusage:—there, is the justification of the sentence so fortunately born, "entire, smooth, and round," that it needs no punctuation, and also (that is the point!) of the most elaborate period, if it be right in its elaboration.—*Essay on Style.*

Pater's sentences are not usually of the "entire, smooth, and round" variety. The first 139 sentences of the *Essay on Style* carry more than 7 structural points per sentence. The *New York Tribune* editorials listed in Chapter IX (page 251 below) have an average of not quite 1.9 points per sentence.

It is often desirable to manage so that a point will serve for two purposes at once, with the advantage of saving an unnecessary break. In this sentence from page 17 of Mr. Fred Lewis Pattee's *American Literature Since 1870*, the second dash marks the end of a parenthesis and at the same time a clause boundary:

> Wordsworth at the opening of the nineteenth century had protested against unreality and false sentiment—"a dressy literature, an exaggerated literature" as Bagehot expressed it—and he started the romantic revolt by proposing in his poems "to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men."

For a like reason there may be advantage in placing quotations so that the quote marks will come at structural breaks. Reference indexes, such as asterisks or superior figures, are usually least obtrusive if placed at ends of sentences.

The Consideration of Variety

To insist on variety in pointing is not an unnecessary refinement, because pointing and style are inseparable. Monotonous pointing is a symptom of indolence or poverty. The excessive frequency of dashes or curves can become an intolerable mannerism; and even the recurrence of commas and periods at noticeably regular intervals may be as awkward as the recurrence of set phrases.

Just what constitutes monotony will depend on the intervals at which points occur and on the nature and the use of the points in question. A passage of considerable length may be pointed with nothing but periods and dashes without becoming at all monotonous. On the other hand, structure and points may be so combined as to give an impression of mechanical sameness.

The counsel of variety is of use in revision rather than in the first stages of work. Variety need not always be consciously worked for in advance of correction; it comes rather as a by-product of good management in respect to such things as clearness and emphasis. A good way to test a passage for variety is to read it aloud.

CHAPTER IV

PARAGRAPH AND SENTENCE POINTING—THE POINTING OF MAIN CLAUSES

THE practical difficulties of punctuation are questions of utility which frequently involve decisions as to structure, and not punctuation alone.

The apparent weight of a group depends partly on its structural status as indicated by capitals, pointing, and form. Other things equal, a sentence is rhetorically superior to a main clause. So far as form is concerned, a main clause outweighs a subordinate clause; and by virtue of its finite verb a clause of either kind is superior to a phrase. Such things as context, length, or phrasing may more than make up the difference; but under like conditions formal rank and consequent apparent value will depend on the structural rank of the element in question. The following forms distribute emphasis very differently:

The Germans give due weight to their own amiable sentimental views of German importance and destinies, but they are also guided by business considerations.—*New York Times,* June 10, 1918.

The Germans give due weight to their own amiable sentimental views of German importance and destinies. But they are also guided by business considerations.

Though the Germans give due weight to their own amiable sentimental views of German importance and destinies, they are not unmindful of business considerations.

The two-sentence form gives increased emphasis to both parts. The form beginning with *though* makes the first clause subordinate, suspending attention for the sake of massing emphasis upon the following main clause.

The various ranks of sentence and sentence elements afford wide latitude of choice. A given notion, like *This is a mistake,* may appear in at least the following variety of forms:

As a sentence, full or elliptical: This is a mistake. What a queer mistake! Isn't this a mistake?

As a main clause, full or elliptical: He says the plans are ready; but that is a mistake. He says the plans are ready; a serious mistake.

As a parenthetical clause: He says—but I know him to be mistaken—that the plans are ready.

As a subordinate clause: Though he is mistaken, I think he is sincere.

As an absolute phrase: That being a mistake, we must change our plan.

As an adverbial phrase: By that mistake he has spoiled a whole day's work.

As a noun phrase: This mistake has obscured the nature of the problem.

As an adjective or adjective phrase: This mistaken plan must be changed. Having been mistaken, we must change our plan.

But the distinctions of main clause, subordinate clause, and other elements cannot be rigidly applied to questions of rhetoric. For purposes of punctuation a clause technically subordinate can be rhetorically a main clause, even a sentence. Such circumstances as length, position, or content may make a subordinate element coordinate with a principal clause. An expression like *No* or *As you please* may properly stand as a sentence.

In the sentence below, the group following the semicolon

is treated as a main clause though technically a mere phrase:

Not many men to-day have the patience to read far in the endless theological literature of that age; and with reason.—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism,* p. 228.

The value and effectiveness of a group will depend only in part on its grammatical status or the other circumstances that contribute to its degree of prominence. It may happen that a casual reference, a word in passing, will be more effective than direct assertion. In the following sentence an important idea is slipped in as if a light parenthesis:

As it was, Germany—in the way of business—wired and lit (and examined) the forts at Liége.—H. G. Wells, *What Is Coming?* (p. 104).

I. Paragraph Pointing

Though paragraph pointing is not a customary name, it is the name of a familiar thing. An entire paragraph may be enclosed in quote marks, curves, or brackets. A colon or dash may indicate a relation between paragraphs. And where a paragraph consists of a single sentence, the sentence point is also the paragraph point.

What is more important, punctuation indicates relations within the paragraph. It often helps to mark the boundary between introductory and developing matter or between development and conclusion. It also helps to show what parts of the paragraph are subordinate or parenthetical and what are principal. Punctuation is an aid to suspension in the paragraph, an indication of relative weights of emphasis, an aid to movement.

A paragraph in Mr. Arnold Bennett's *Books and Persons*

(page 39), beginning thus, might be differently pointed save for considerations which look beyond the two sentences here quoted:

"A Set of Six" will not count among Mr. Conrad's major works. But in the mere use of English it shows an advance upon all his previous books.

The group beginning *But in the mere use of English* might be separated from the preceding words by a comma or semicolon, except for being an introduction to the remainder of the paragraph. The sentences thereafter dwell not on the rank of the book but on Mr. Conrad's use of English. If reduced to the rank of a clause, the group would not be prominent enough for its work in the paragraph. The decision in such a case can be made only with reference to the context.

The following passage from an editorial in the New York *Globe* (June 1, 1918) might be pointed differently; but any change from period to comma or comma to semicolon would change the distribution of emphasis.

Against the German attack, made possible by the peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Allies have placed themselves under a single command. General Foch is not a trench fighter. The problem he had to consider when determining his strategy was unlike the problem before the German staff after the Marne, the men he commanded were of a different temper. Above all he must keep armies intact. Fighting in fixed position, he ran the risk of a fatal breach a heavily reinforced foe might make. . . .

If the third sentence were isolated it probably would be pointed with semicolon, or divided into two sentences; but in the actual context the comma is best for movement and for proper management of emphasis.

Points and Paragraph Movement

By exhibiting the structural divisions of the paragraph, and by contributing to suspension and the distribution of emphasis, judicious punctuation is an important aid to movement. On the other hand, misused points distort emphasis and make the paragraph monotonous or halting.

The effect of punctuation marks on tone and movement, and their use for paragraph suspension, may be observed in the following paragraph from an article by Mr. W. R. Thayer in the *Saturday Evening Post* for February 16, 1918.

> Very pretty disavowals and surprising insinuations! But methinks the Kaiser did protest too much. What was his plot? What did his camouflage hide with intent to deceive? His secret purpose has been dissected with a surgeon's skill and dispassionateness by Mr. André Chéradame, and I will content myself here with only an outline of his conclusions.

The transitional group in the paragraph just quoted is an elliptical exclamatory sentence. The introductory sentence proper (*But methinks the Kaiser did protest too much*) is declarative, in a somewhat quieter tone. The next two sentences are suspensive by aid of interrogative form and pointing. The last sentence of the paragraph carries over to the succeeding passage the accumulated force of the suspension.

In the following paragraph there is a case of sentence series, the parallelism of form being an aid to the movement of the paragraph:

> In advertising print, typography is merely the servant of the advertising idea. It should not exist for itself at all. It should never obtrude by a display of dexterity for its own sake. It is

merely the medium through which an advertising idea is given that physical form which helps the reader to grasp in the least time and with the least effort what is being said to him.—Benjamin Sherbow, *Making Type Work*, p. 7.

Points affect movement, and movement reacts upon pointing. The following sentence, from page 180 of Miss Agnes Repplier's *Americans and Others*, may seem strange with this punctuation:

It voices desires and dignities without number, it subjects the importance of the thing done to the importance of the manner of doing it.

The sentence out of its context seems careless; but actually the pointing is the best for the purpose. The parallelism of the sentences and the momentum of the paragraph make the light pointing adequate. The first half of the paragraph reads as follows:

The symbolism of dress is a subject which has never received its due share of attention, yet it stands for attributes in the human race which otherwise defy analysis. It is interwoven with all our carnal and with all our spiritual instincts. It represents a cunning triumph over hard conditions, a turning of needs into victories. It voices desires and dignities without number, it subjects the importance of the thing done to the importance of the manner of doing it.

Of the many relations of punctuation within the paragraph, only one more need be noticed for the present—the parenthetical relation. In the first of the following passages the parenthesis belongs to the sentence. In the second, the sentence in curves is parenthetical to the paragraph.

Yet here, in this everyday setting, and entirely unexpectedly (for I had never dreamed of such a thing), my eyes were opened,

and for the first time in all my life I caught a glimpse of the ecstatic beauty of reality.—Margaret P. Montague, *Twenty Minutes of Reality*, p. 7f.

Perhaps, too, this may be the great difference between the saints and the Puritans. Both are agreed that goodness is the means to the end, but the saints have passed on to the end and entered into the realization, and are happy. (One of the most endearing attributes of saints of a certain type was—or rather is, for one refuses to believe that saints are all of the past—their childlike gayety, which can proceed only from a happy and trustful heart.) The Puritan, on the other hand, has stuck fast in the means—is still worrying over the guide-posts, and is distrustful and over-anxious.—*Ib.*, p. 27f.

Points Showing Relations between Paragraphs

Punctuation marks are used to show relations not only within but between paragraphs. A paragraph which is parenthetical to a passage is sometimes enclosed in curves, though its relation is more often indicated by wording, as by the formula *be it said in passing*. And sometimes paragraphs are in appositive or suspended relation.

Paragraph suspension is often marked by the colon, sometimes by the dash, rarely by semicolon or comma.

The paragraph colon and the nearly obsolete paragraph semicolon are thus used in an old textbook:

> Abnormal modifications of the predicate are of three classes:—
>
> 1. *Other parts of speech used as adverbs;*
> 2. *Phrases;*
> 3. *Clauses.*

In such tabulated matter modern printers prefer to point divisions with the period, a better arrangement because by comparison the period is not suspensive. Suspension maintained through tabulated matter is anomalous.

The paragraph colon—often with an unnecessary dash—is common before quoted passages or other matter formally introduced. Sometimes also it is used before original matter. The following is from an editorial in a popular magazine:

War will bring great changes. There is much speculation as to what they will be in this direction or that. One thing is already fairly settled:

War marks the end of the régime of individualistic unlimited competition. Its demonstration of the advantages of rational cooperation, as opposed to our legal insistence upon competition always and everywhere, is too overwhelming to be obscured.

The use of the colon in this passage is highly formal. Most introductory sentences followed by matter not quoted or tabulated take the period.

The paragraph dash is sometimes used for paragraph suspension after such a formula as *It is held* or *Provided.* In the following sentence, on the contrary, the dashes are used not after an introductory formula but between the members of a series divided into paragraphs.

If a man is not thrilled by intimate contact with nature: with the sun, with the earth, which is his origin and the arouser of his acutest emotions—

If he is not troubled by the sight of beauty in many forms—

. . . . . .

If he is of those who talk about "this age of shams," "this age without ideals," "this hysterical age," and this heaven-knows-what-age—

Then that man, though he reads undisputed classics for twenty hours a day, though he has a memory of steel, though he rivals Porson in scholarship and Sainte Beuve in judgment, is not receiving from literature what literature has to give.—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste,* p. 116.

In general, relations between paragraphs are most often indicated without the mechanical device of suspension pointing.

Paragraphs and Paragraphing

Like punctuation, paragraphing exhibits grouping or determines apparent grouping. The difference is that usually the groups concerned are larger and the breaks more emphatic.

A paragraph is a sentence or group of sentences—in rare cases less than a sentence—standing to itself as an independent composition or as part of a composition. In the latter case each paragraph is customarily marked off from the preceding paragraph by indention, or initial white space, the first line of each paragraph being set in from the margin line. In most cases there is also a remainder of white space at the end of the last line.

In some books and magazines the first paragraph of a chapter is not indented; and sometimes, especially in poster and advertisement work, indention is made unnecessary by extra white space between paragraphs. In solid typewritten matter it is frequently desirable to space the paragraphs apart besides indenting first lines.

Division into paragraphs must be decided mainly by individual cases. The principal considerations are as follows:

1. Paragraph division serves its purpose so far as it enables the reader to follow the thought with interest and understanding. If paragraphs are so long or so short as to obscure the relation and relative weight of the parts, the paragraphing is bad. There is no fixed position for topical or summarizing matter, nor is there any best method or set of methods of paragraph construction.

2. A paragraph sets off a group which presumably constitutes a unit of thought. A paragraph should therefore be so composed as to be and seem sufficient to its purpose and free from extraneous matter. But unity is far from being the decisive consideration in paragraphing. Whether a sentence or passage shall be set off as a paragraph must be decided partly on grounds of emphasis and movement. Such a group as the summary of a long passage may require emphasis by paragraphing in order to make clear its function in the context.

3. A sentence or group of sentences is usually more emphatic or at least more distinct if separately paragraphed than if combined with other sentences. But the more frequent the paragraph breaks, the less each counts for emphasis.

4. Paragraphing has an effect on the movement of composition. Frequent paragraphing may become choppy and falsely emphatic; but matter which is to be read rapidly may be most effective in short paragraphs. Problems of paragraphing are problems of thought and adaptation, not of conformity to rule.

5. The proper paragraph length depends partly on the width of lines or the size of pages. In narrow measure or on short pages paragraphs should be somewhat shorter than ordinarily. According to Mr. W. G. Bleyer (*Types of News Writing*, p. 11), the typical newspaper paragraph varies from 35 to 75 words, as against 150 to 250 in ordinary prose. But this difference is due only in part to line length. Perhaps the main explanation is that popular newspapers are intended to be read rapidly by all sorts of people and with the least possible exertion. In some of the most readable newspapers, on the contrary, paragraphs in the leading editorials (as opposed to the detached compositions known specifically as "paragraphs") are often long.

For example, in the *New York Times* for June 14, 1918, paragraphs in the leading editorials average about 21 lines and about 131 words, extracts being excluded from the estimate.

6. In dialogue it is customary to make a new paragraph for each change of speaker, but this is far from being an invariable rule. Sometimes quote marks, mid-paragraph dashes, or the words Question and Answer are held sufficient for grouping.

Points and Paragraph Structure

Parts of a paragraph may be labeled topical, developing, concluding, or transitional, though two or more functions may be performed by the same set of words. The structural lines may be difficult to discern, and properly so. Where lightness and informality are requisite, it may be well to reduce formal introduction and summarizing to a minimum. Transitions likewise should often be managed with the least possible formality. But in any case the paragraph should be clear as a whole, and the parts should work together to their common end.

The Mid-Paragraph

As a rule in modern typography, division within the paragraph is effected by wording and the ordinary sentence points. A new subtopic may be introduced by a connective phrase like *on the other hand*, or informally without any device which would call attention to the framework of the paragraph. If the meaning is clear the plan may be kept out of sight. Change from topic to topic may be made sufficently clear by a change from interrogative to declarative form, or without change of sentence type at all.

A device once common but seldom used today save in crowded composition is the mid-paragraph dash—a dash reinforcing a full stop. The following specimen is from page 171 of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon Revisited:*

"There," said my father, "you confirm an opinion that I have long held.—Nothing is so misleading as the testimony of eye-witnesses."

A device which is becoming familiar in America is the use of reinforcing suspension periods—a row of dots, usually three—to strengthen or modify a period or other full stop. The period is a sign of completion; the period with suspension points following is made suspensive, with the suggestion that the reader is to think a moment about the preceding words, or to look forward with special interest. Mr. Edwin E. Slosson says of Mr. H. G. Wells: "In the midst of his most eloquent passages he stops, shakes his head, runs in a row of dots, and adds a few words, hinting at another point of view." The following paragraph of dialogue is from a novel by Mr. Wells:

"You see," said Mr. Britling, trying to get it into focus, "I have known quite decent Germans. There must be some sort of misunderstanding. . . . I wonder what makes them hate us. There seems to me no reason in it."

The suspension periods are not likely to mark a distinct topical break; they are indefinite signs of meditation.

There are many good writers who do not use suspension periods under any circumstances.

II. Sentence Pointing

Terminal or sentence points mark a sentence as either complete or abruptly left incomplete, so that following matter will begin with a capital.

"Sentence" will be used equally of full sentences and of broken or elliptical expressions displayed as sentences by initial capital and by terminal pointing. As both conversation and writing go largely in remarks not fully equipped with subject and predicate, the pointing of elliptical sentences as if in regular form need not be disturbing. There is much use of clipped sentences even in careful editorial and essay writing.

Sentences may be pointed with period, question mark, exclamation mark, colon (capital or paragraph break following), dash, or suspension periods. Suspension periods are used either alone or reinforcing an ordinary full stop; and the dash is also used, though rarely in book text, as reinforcement of a full stop. A terminal point may have with it a parenthetical point or a quote mark; but since these are not terminal points they will be included elsewhere.

Sentence Length

Good sentences vary greatly in length. The number of words a sentence can advantageously carry is not subject to rule; it depends on the circumstances of the individual case, among them the movement of the passage and the requirements of emphasis. The length of an individual sentence is determined by considerations of clearness, effective unity, variety, and emphasis, all of these with reference to the meaning and desired tone of the passage. In advertisements and some kinds of newspaper writing the average sentence is much shorter than in most book prose; but the popular notion that newspaper sentences are usually short is an error. The characteristic of the best newspaper sentence type is not brevity but directness.

The long sentence gives opportunity for suspension and qualification. The short sentence is useful for such pur-

poses as abrupt emphasis and emphatic transition or summary. The abuse of either kind results in monotony and bad management of emphasis.

Sentences with their terminal pointing may be considered under three heads: (1) complete sentences, elliptical sentences included, (2) sentences abruptly left incomplete, and (3) suspended sentences. The familiar terms declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory will be used, but with reference to meaning rather than form.

1. Complete Sentences

An ordinary declarative or imperative sentence, full or elliptical, is pointed with the period. But a declarative or imperative sentence which is intended to be very emphatic or strongly exclamatory may take the exclamation mark. The following passage is from an editorial in the New York *Evening Post* for March 26, 1918:

> Why talk longer of concessions to the enemy, or of peace negotiations, when stark force might make them absolute masters? Give up Belgium? Nay, rather, seize more of France. Listen to the counsels of moderation? On the contrary, strike right and left like the devils of hell, and give God all the praise!

A sentence declarative in form but interrogative in purpose takes the question mark. The form of *He is ready?* is declarative, but the meaning requires the question mark.

The indirect question does not often make its sentence interrogative. *I asked him what he meant by his message* is not a question but an assertion about a question, the question being given only in substance. On the contrary, a declarative sentence ending with a direct question takes the question mark, which points at once the quoted matter and the sentence. The same practice is followed in the case of quoted exclamations.

He suddenly asked me, "What are you doing here?"

"You give [redacted] drugs, Doctor," he complained. "You're a scab on the profession."—Robert Herrick, *The Master of the Inn*, p. 52f.

Though sentences interrogative in form are usually pointed with the question mark, the length and meaning may make the period preferable.

Was it in consequence of such injunctions that an address dealing with the causes of the war delivered by a distinguished professor of history elicited from a woman of notoriously German sympathies the comment, "It was fine; he balanced things so beautifully."—W. H. Hobbs, in the *New York Tribune*, April 16, 1918.

The length of the sentence and the declarative form of the quotation make the period preferable.

In the following sentence interrogative form is merely a form of courtesy. The period is better than the question mark would be.

Will you please quote prices for (1) 200 copies in paper, (2) 300 copies in regular cloth binding, and (3) 25 copies in library binding.

The typical exclamatory form appears in the sentence *What a price to pay!* But since pointing is likely to be determined by meaning rather than form, a sentence outwardly declarative or interrogative may be pointed as an exclamation.

"Am I cold!" Edwin repeated.—Arnold Bennett, *These Twain*, p. 405.

Edwin's words mean "Of course I am cold."

The choice between question and exclamation mark may be far from obvious, as in this:

The enemy that comes to her [England] [illegible] a visible host or armada she can still close with and throttle; but when the foe arrives as an arrow that flieth by night, what avail the old sinews, the old stoutness of heart!—John Erskine, *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent*, p. 25.

The form of the following sentence is exclamatory, but the point used is the period. The exclamation mark would be unnecessarily strong.

Still, when something is said of a man's stamina, how small is the number of those to whom it occurs that *stamina* is a plural. —Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English*, p. 156.

In sentences of mixed type, as part declarative and part interrogative, the final clause determines the sentence pointing.

The thing is preposterous and impossible; and yet is not that what the whole course and action of the German armies has meant wherever they have moved?—From a speech by President Wilson, as reported in a newspaper.

If the last clause of a compound sentence is clearly exclamatory, the terminal point is the exclamation mark.

2. Uncompleted Sentences

To mark a sentence as incomplete the usual mark is the dash, the length of the dash being according to office rules. With the dash there may be a question or exclamation mark to designate the character of the sentence. The dash is sometimes replaced by suspension periods.

She had meant, she owned, to glance through the book; but she had been so absorbed in a novel of Trollope's that—

"No one reads Trollope now," Mrs. Ballinger interrupted.—Edith Wharton, *Xingu,* p. 7.

And for an ending:—"Her tremulous eyes sought his; breathing a sigh she murmured . . ." O succession of dots, charged with significance vague but tremendous, there were to be many of you in my novel, because you play so important a part in the literature of the country of Victor Hugo and M. Loubet!—Arnold Bennett, *The Truth about an Author,* p. 63f.

Where a sentence is broken in fiction dialogue, the dash used at the point of interruption is sometimes repeated where the sentence is resumed. The pointing of fiction, especially of dialogue, is likely to be more "rhetorical," according to the old use of the word, than that of ordinary text.

The dash as a terminal point is customarily used without additional period.

3. Suspended Sentences

The sentence is often defined as a group of words expressing a complete thought. As a matter of fact, sentences are sometimes pointed with marks of incompletion or suspension.

There are two types of suspension. A full sentence may have suspension periods which suggest a meditative pause, the suspension periods being used either alone or in addition to another terminal point. In the other type of suspension a dependent group, preceded by a colon or other mark, is capitalized or even set as a new paragraph.

The following sentences employ terminal suspension periods:

In reply he talked about literary cranks. He spoke of how Thoreau, with his long hair and ugly looks, frightened strangers

who suddenly met him in the woods. I thanked him for light on Thoreau. . . . But he had to admit that my hair was short.—Vachel Lindsay, *A Handy Guide for Beggars*, p. 82.

"Les forts tiennent toujours!" . . . . . But we had seen no soldiers save Belgians, though a few German prisoners were brought in; they thought that they were in France and expressed surprise that Paris was not larger.—Brand Whitlock, "Belgium," in *Everybody's Magazine*, March, 1918.

In the second passage the suspension periods are used in a group of five. Groups of three are more usual, as in the quotation from Mr. Lindsay.

Where the following matter is dependent, suspension is usually managed with the colon, less often with the dash, seldom with other points unless the following matter is quoted.

The following sentences from Dr. A. S. Cook's *Higher Study of English* (pages 92, 109, and 59) exemplify three ways of managing expressions capable of being suspended:

Now here belongs a truth which is frequently overlooked. It is this: One does not truly and completely know a word, as Lord Chatham and Tennyson knew words, save through contrast and comparison.

I have said that, in my opinion, there are three classes of men who, beyond any others, raise the human species out of savagery, or prevent it from relapsing into that state. These, I repeat, are the ministers of religion, the poets—a kind of generic term which designates the arts in general by the chief of all arts—and the teachers of the humanities.

If we look at the situation largely, this, I think, may fairly be said at the moment: that the emphasis is upon quantity rather than quality, upon phenomena rather than principles, upon practice rather than theory, or upon the science rather than the philosophy of the subject.

In the first passage there is a case of colon suspension, the following group being capitalized as a sentence. In the

second, the introductory group takes the period, a lighter point because non-suspensive. In the third passage the introductory words are pointed with the colon; but because the following group is not capitalized the suspension is less emphatic than in the passage where the colon is followed by a capital.

Suspension with the colon between sentences may be open to objection. The colon gives the impression of saying to the reader, "Look closely; important matter coming." In the great majority of cases introductory matter, save before a quotation or list, is better pointed with period than with colon. The period is lighter and less formal.

The dash as a suspensive mark before a dependent sentence is more abrupt but less emphatic than the colon. It differs from the period in being suspensive. For lightness of movement the period is obviously better.

It is clear that expectation can be awakened by wording without the aid of unusual devices in punctuation. A question or an ordinary declarative sentence may be quite sufficient. The more unobtrusively such things are managed, the better for movement.

The Choice of Sentence Types

The terminal points offer room for considerable latitude of choice in sentence types. The declarative form is useful several times oftener than the exclamatory and interrogative put together; but questions and exclamations are effective out of proportion to their frequency. The question mark is useful for informal suspension, the exclamation mark for emphasis or irony, both of them for variety of tone and movement.

For abruptness there is the dash, and for vague impressiveness—if one likes that sort of thing—there are suspen-

sion periods. The risk in using these points is that the author may seem too much pleased with his own eloquence.

III. The Pointing of Main Clauses

It is often difficult to choose between terminal and compounding points. Either a sentence or a clause may begin with *but, and, yet,* or no connective at all. Nor is the principle of unity decisive. A good clause is no less a unit than a good sentence, and what is called "closeness of relation" is too elastic to be always useful. The antithetical relation may be shown without pointing, or with comma, semicolon, colon, or full stop. Antithesis may be developed by the two halves of a paragraph, or by contrasted passages. Each question of the kind has to be settled as an individual case, with a view to clearness and effective unity.

In either of the following cases division into sentences would be possible, and in a different context might be necessary to proper management of emphasis.

It is all very well to pour oil on troubled waters; it is foolishness to pour it on wildfire.—Irvin S. Cobb, *"Speaking of Prussians—"* (p. 49).

In one sense, it is impossible to learn words apart from ideas; for a word will convey no meaning whatever if we are not in some way acquainted—directly, or by description, or by inference—with some part of the idea for which it stands.—William Tenney Brewster, *Writing English Prose,* p. 233.

A long group is more likely to be set as a sentence than a shorter group; but length is only one circumstance of the case. For the sake of emphasis a phrase like *of course* may be given sentence rank; a group five times as long and equipped with subject and predicate may be more useful as a clause.

Main Clauses and Compound Sentences

A compound sentence consists of two or more main clauses, a main clause being one which, with its conjunction if it has one, could stand alone as a sentence. A parenthetical clause does not count as a main clause, whatever its form.

The sentence *If he comes you may invite him to stay* is not a compound sentence, the first clause being unable to stand alone except as an elliptical sentence with main clause implied from the context. But the parts bounded by the semicolon in the following sentence could stand as independent sentences:

In the bass family, as the popular jingle has it, nobody works but father; he's on guard all day, fins in constant motion, keeping the foes away.—From an editorial in the New York *Sun*.

If any clause of a compound sentence carries a subordinate clause, the sentence is technically "compound complex," but for the present purpose the distinction is not important.

A compound sentence may contain more than two statements, besides whatever ideas are conveyed in subordinate elements. The possible relations between clauses are numerous.

A group technically subordinate or elliptical may be rhetorically a main clause, with pointing to correspond.

The puppy offers no sign whatever; just lies in the road.—Arnold Bennett, *The Author's Craft*, p. 11.

It is the largest and fullest picture of life in the order to which it belongs; the only thing that shows incontestably the power of the old heroic poetry to deal on a fairly large scale with subjects taken from the national tradition.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval*, p. 30.

In the first of these the part following the semicolon has a verb but no subject. In the second, the semicolon is followed by a group which may be called an elliptical clause, though technically an appositive group.

In like manner it is often necessary to treat as main clauses such subordinate groups as relative clauses. Punctuation is concerned not with grammatical but with rhetorical classification.

The Compounding Points

The points used between main clauses, whether full or elliptical, are seldom any others than comma, semicolon, colon, dash.

The comma is the lightest and least specialized of the compounding points, and the most frequent.

The semicolon is the most clearly specialized coordinating point. It is specially useful for balance and antithesis and for cases of compounding in which a second clause repeats with addition the idea of a clause which precedes. It is also a useful compounding mark when there is no connective between clauses. The semicolon is not ponderous unless used with formal wording or misused in place of other points.

The colon is usually a mark of apposition or expectation following introductory matter; but sometimes it is employed in cases for which the more frequent mark is the semicolon. Like the semicolon the colon may be at the same time anticipatory and compounding. Where part of a compound sentence contains a semicolon, the colon is the traditional mark for the principal break; but this use of the colon is no longer common. In American newspapers, special and foreign articles excepted, the compounding colon is rare.

The dash properly marks a sudden turn, surprise, or

interruption. It is a useful compounding point where the following clause is in a sort of apposition to the clause which precedes. The unusual combination semicolon with dash is a variant of the semicolon. The comma with dash is a variant of the dash.

In rare cases question and exclamation marks are used between clauses.

> How did he know but that Hanky and Panky might have driven over from Sunch'ston to see Mr. Turvey, and might put up at this very house? or they might even be going to spend the night here.—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 161.

The effect of the compounding exclamation mark, which is even less common than the compounding question mark, may be judged from the following passage from a modern reprint of Beckford's *Vathek:*

> "Still more misfortunes!" cried Morakanabad, with a sigh. "Ah, Commander of the faithful, our holy Prophet is certainly irritated against us! it behoves you to appease him."

The compounding exclamation mark is practically obsolete, and the compounding question is rare. Neither one need be mentioned in the remainder of the chapter.

The use of suspension periods at clause breaks may be occasionally observed; but this pointing is so infrequent as to be rated eccentric.

Compound sentences may be considered under three heads: sentences with "grammatical" connectives, those with "logical" connectives, and those without connectives at clause breaks. The points used often enough to be counted as important are comma, semicolon, colon, and dash. More than a mention of the others would exaggerate their present usefulness.

1. Compounding with Grammatical Connective

For the lack of a better name, the conjunctions *and, but, for, or,* and *nor* may be called grammatical connectives, the name used by Mr. R. D. Miller in the article *Coordination and the Comma,* which is listed on page 12 above. Such connectives as *nevertheless* and *therefore* will be called logical connectives.

Both classes of connectives may be used between clauses or as paragraph-transition words; but the grammatical connectives are more frequently employed as clause links, and their use often permits lighter pointing than would be desirable with the logical connectives.

Where a grammatical connective is present, compounding is sometimes managed without pointing.

I looked at my watch and it was close to five.—Simeon Strunsky, *Post-Impressions,* p. 10.

We went over our list of books for the summer and she wondered whether it wouldn't pay to get a seamstress into the house and avoid the exhausting trips downtown.—*Ib.,* p. 22.

These sentences are of the conversational type, good in their context but of course not suited to all occasions. The following sentence has one clause break marked with comma, another not pointed:

She is going to work and she is going to weep, but she is also going to dress.—Agnes Repplier, *Americans and Others,* p. 175.

The following sentence, from the *Saturday Evening Post* of December 15, 1917, is of a type not unusual in newspapers:

The estimate for the two additional clerks in Washington will go to the Committee on Appropriations and the estimate for

an additional field agent will go to an entirely different committee.

Comma with Grammatical Connective

If a conjunction like *and* is present, the comma is sufficient to hold together clauses of considerable length and complexity. This is true even of book punctuation. It may happen that a comma which is sufficient for clear grouping in its own sentence may not serve the requirements of the paragraph; but neither length of clauses nor the use of commas within clauses can be said to "require" the semicolon for grouping. The semicolon may or may not be needed; cases are properly decided according to requirements of grouping and weight in the light of the context.

Here is a solid and ancient festive tradition still plying a roaring trade in the streets, and they think it vulgar.—G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics,* p. 100.

We have heard of a certain standard of decorum which demands that things should be funny without being vulgar, but the standard of this decorum demands that if things are vulgar they shall be vulgar without being funny.—*Ib.,* p. 113.

If either of the sentences from Mr. Chesterton came at the end of the paragraph, the comma might give place to the semicolon.

In the following sentences the comma is sufficient in spite of the presence of other commas:

By 1849 the national movement had begun to flow in its natural channel, and it became clear that the unity of Italy, if it was to be accomplished at all, would be accomplished under the House of Savoy.—Lacy Collison-Morley, *Modern Italian Literature,* p. 267.

In this respect the Revolution bears out the observation of Tocqueville that, although political in its nature, it proceeded in the manner of a religious revolution, for it stirred up animosities which in their inveterate bitterness rank with the hateful emotions that have accompanied religious changes.—James Harvey Robinson, *The New History,* p. 198f.

Sentences of equal or greater length with nothing stronger than commas at the main breaks may be found in any newspaper.

Predicate Series with One Conjunction

In opposition to the usual book rule that triads of nouns or adjectives shall be pointed according to the formula *Tom, Dick, and Harry are in town,* many newspapers omit the second comma and set the series as *Tom, Dick and Harry.* And therefore—the logic is not guaranteed—some compositors think it their duty to treat predicates in the same way. Three-clause compound sentences with one comma are rare, but three-predicate sentences in the form *advanced to the river, reconnoitered half an hour and then retired* are not uncommon.

The expression *Caesar, Pompey and Crassus* is clear even if one does not like the pointing; but the application of a rigid no-comma rule to the last two members of a predicate series may obscure the grouping. The following sentence is from a popular weekly magazine:

Some spy out and report our military preparations; others foment strikes, set class against class, preach pacifism and pessimism and poison the springs of thought.

The omission of the comma which should be used after *pessimism* lets it appear momentarily that *poison* is in

series with *pacifism*. When there is a rigid office rule against the second comma, such sentences ought not to be written. Such a rule, as a rule for all conditions, has only one point of virtue—it discourages the writing of triads.

Where the series consists of full clauses, not mere predicates with subject in common, the comma is seldom omitted. The following sentence is a typical case:

Ludendorff has collected divisions from every quarter, he has brought up more guns, and he seems determined to press against the British left flank until it breaks or exhaustion overpowers his forces.—*New York Tribune,* April 6, 1918.

Semicolon with Grammatical Connective

The semicolon is used with grammatical connectives between clauses short or long, simple or elaborate. The semicolon may be necessary to clear grouping when the parts of a compound sentence are elaborate; may be necessary even in a short and direct compound sentence to make clear the weight of the parts in their context.

The second sentence in the following passage is short and direct enough to be pointed at the clause boundary with the comma or nothing. But the importance of the idea *they skipped* in the paragraph makes the semicolon best:

They worked these into plots of adventure, mystery, fairy magic; the adventures were too good to be lost; so the less refined English readers, who were puzzled or wearied by sentimental conversations, were not able to do without the elegant romances. They read them; and they skipped.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 72.

In this paragraph from a *Saturday Evening Post* editorial (May 18, 1918) the semicolon could be replaced by the

comma or period only if the adjacent groups were intended to hold a different rank in the paragraph:

Your affair is the triumphant proletariat—without bosses, jobs, fuel, food, clothes or lodgings, but gloriously triumphant at last. You may run out of all the necessities of life; but the resources of the dictionary are practically unlimited.

This sentence, from an article by Mr. C. H. Ward, is a clause series for which commas would be too light:

As a printer he had ideals; as a theologian he was a keen progressive; he loved and helped to edit Burns; he received an honorary degree from Harvard; and all the days of his long life he studied punctuation. [The reference is to John Wilson, author of the *Treatise on English Punctuation.*]

If these clauses were set as sentences their staccato emphasis would be intolerable.

Other Points with Grammatical Connective

The use of the colon with any of the grammatical connectives may be defended on the ground of rhythmical effect or clear designation of value in the context; but this use of the colon is infrequent.

Form becomes vanity, art is held a bauble, style an indulgence; strenuousness is all: and that way disaster lies.—William Watson, *Pencraft,* p. 100.

Practice is the only absolute proof of sincerity: but defect in practice is no proof of insincerity.—John Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle,* p. 50.

The dash, alone or with comma, is sometimes used for abruptness or surprise. It directs attention mainly to what follows.

A little patient plodding and industrious thumbing of the pages,—and there you are!—F. T. Cooper, *The Craftsmanship of Writing*, p. 244.

A Frenchwoman came to London for the first time—and no English person would ever guess the phenomenon which vanquished all others in her mind on the opening day. She saw a cat walking across a street.—Arnold Bennett, *The Author's Craft*, p. 17.

The dash as a compounding point is oftener used without than with a grammatical connective.

2. Compounding with Logical Connective

Link words used in compounding—repetitions and pronouns not counted—are classed as logical if not in the small list of grammatical connectives (*and, but, for, or, nor*). Some common logical connectives are *so, therefore, nevertheless, on the other hand.*

In the article *Coordination and the Comma,* Mr. R. D. Miller points out two peculiarities of the logical connectives. (1) The logical connective is often embedded within a clause, whereas the grammatical connective regularly begins the clause. (2) With a logical connective in a two-clause compound sentence, except with *yet,* the comma is seldom sufficient. Mr. Miller concludes that "the use of the comma alone before a logical connective [except *yet*] is the mark of an illiterate, slovenly, or careless style." But there is an evident tendency toward a relaxation of the traditional custom, especially in the case of *so.*

With respect to pointing, *yet* is treated like *but* or *and.* In the following sentence it is used with the comma:

The fate of Alsace-Lorraine is properly an international and hence world question, yet after all what convinced President

Wilson of Teutonic insincerity was less Germany's dubious proposals about the lost provinces than her open and flagrantly predatory and cynical treatment of the Ukraine, Rumania, and the Soviets.—The *Dial,* June 6, 1918.

As a matter of course, *yet* may follow the semicolon or any one of several other points. Like *but* or *and,* it is frequently employed at the beginning of a sentence or paragraph.

With logical connectives the typical compounding point is the semicolon. The comma is usually too light, the dash too abrupt, the colon too formal or at any rate contrary to prevailing American practice. If the semicolon is not suitable, a sentence break is usually best.

Every one could understand and enjoy it; so it became the favourite thing at popular festivals, as well as at the Christmas entertainments in the great hall.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 82.

Forgetting, then, is highly important. Without it there would be no new experiences at all. Yet if it were complete, there would be no new experiences either, for it is through our old experiences that we get our new ones.—Ernest Carroll Moore, *What Is Education?* (p. 277).

In the following sentence the colon marks the boundary between the larger groups, one of them containing a semicolon:

Nor is it even a very good book: on the contrary, Mr. Melville's transcription of the letters shows signs of carelessness; his portrait of the writer suggests an attempt at whitewashing, while his interpretation of Beckford's published works fails to give their real significance in literature.—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism,* p. 3.

Many careful writers would replace the colon in this case with a period.

The effect of the comma with the logical connective *so* may be judged from the following specimens:

He found, however, that the evolution of society could not be treated satisfactorily in fiction, so he began, in 1880, while abroad, the researches in history which were to occupy him thereafter to the end of his life.—Meredith Nicholson, *The Provincial American and Other Papers,* p. 50.

There was now no reason why he should not take it with him, so he put it in his pocket.—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 61.

Sentences of this type pointed with the comma have been so infrequent in respectable writing, save recently, that the comma may seem careless. Sentences with the connective *so* are not frequently useful in writing, however much used in conversation.

3. Compounding without Connective

Compounding is often managed without a connective, the most frequent points in this case being comma and semicolon. The colon is sometimes used when the first clause is informally anticipatory, oftener when the wording is formal. But the semicolon is more frequent even when the first clause awakens expectation of a complementary clause to follow.

The dash is useful when the following clause represents an unexpected turn, sometimes also to mark clause-opposition. The other points commonly used between successive statements in appositive relation are the colon and the period. If a paragraph begins with the words *He has only one excuse,* there may properly be a sentence break. Both the colon and the dash are strongly suspensive, the period being comparatively light.

Comma without Connective

The compounding comma without connective is manifestly growing in favor. With the decreasing use of formal link words, with a growing preference for light and direct style, compound sentences that need no conjunctions are becoming much more frequent. The semicolon is still used in many sentences of the kind, and to all appearances will not yield its place however vigorously attacked by those who would make our laws of punctuation. But there are numerous cases, more numerous in lively than in sluggish writing, in which the comma is better.

With no connective present, the comma requires careful handling. It is too easy a point to bungle. In general, the comma is sufficient only when supported by series, correlation, parallel form, climax, a common modifier, or the momentum of the paragraph.

In the following case of series the clauses have the same subject (with change from *man* to *he*) and are in climax:

> Man fixed the association of colours with grief and gladness, he made ornaments the insignia of office, he ordained that fabric should grace the majesty of power.—Agnes Repplier, *Americans and Others*, p. 181.

In the second sentence of the following paragraph the comma is used between clauses in balance:

> The awful retribution which is to fall upon Germany for the next cycle of years is already foreshadowed. Germany's men are slaughtered or crippled, her women are bereft. Upon them rests the curse of grinding toil performed under the unpitying scorn of a whole world for a people who delivered up their souls and minds at the bidding of rulers who saved them the trouble of thinking for themselves, reading justice, doing right. —New York *Evening Sun*, July 20, 1918.

As a matter of course, balance may be managed with the semicolon or in successive sentences. The balancing comma is dependent on circumstances of structure and movement of which the semicolon and period are independent.

For correlation, usually involving balance, the typical point is the semicolon. But circumstances may suggest the comma.

I know that while ordinary frugality is a peasant virtue self-restraint is a patrician quality of the highest order. Wastefulness is not only foolish, it is essentially vulgar.—Bliss Carman in *War Thrift,* as cited in the New York *Evening Sun,* July 22, 1918.

Where two or more clauses have a modifier in common, light pointing is often sufficient, as in the following sentence from an editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post:*

Her currency sells at twenty cents on the dollar, the population of her capital faces starvation day after day, there is want everywhere—because intangible wealth in the form of industrial organization and discipline has been destroyed.

Semicolons would group the subordinate clause with the last main clause, and conceal its relation to the other members of the series.

In many cases with the comma there is only an appearance of coordination. In the first of the following sentences the first clause is a preliminary group not coordinate with the second.

I repeat, he is clearly within his rights.
He leaves this afternoon, he tells me.

The Semicolon without Connective

With no link word between successive statements the comma is too light unless supported by special circumstances of structure or momentum. The period, though not obtrusive, may give the groups more than their due weight in the passage. Midway between period and comma is the semicolon. It gives the preceding and following clauses a higher rank in the paragraph than the comma would give them, a lower rank than they would have if grouped as sentences. As formal link words are sparingly used in modern writing, varied clause pointing is more than ever necessary for distinct but informal grouping. Ability to use the semicolon adds considerably to a writer's resources.

Clauses separated by the semicolon are sometimes in series, sometimes in balance. A common type of sentence with the semicolon is in this form:

> It is not a question of surrender or abdication; it is a question rather of give and take.—C. Alphonso Smith, *O. Henry Biography*, p. 241.

The second clause repeats with addition the idea of the first. The comma or period might replace the semicolon in this particular case—if proper weight and grouping in the paragraph permitted—but neither would give so distinctly the effect of balance.

The second sentence of the following passage illustrates the use of the semicolon for statements in series. Periods would give the statements exaggerated emphasis and would affect the movement disagreeably.

> By the year 1810 it may fairly be said to have reached maturity. Scott had attained his poetical zenith; Wordsworth had

produced nearly all his best work; Coleridge's *annus mirabilis* lay already far in the past. To the general public, indeed, these writers were still strange, nay in some cases hardly known.—T. S. Omond, *The Romantic Triumph*, p. 4.

Colon or Dash without Connective

Where the first clause of a compound sentence is a formal introduction to the second, the relation is ordinarily marked by the colon. The use of the colon without marked anticipatory quality is comparatively infrequent.

The following sentences begin with formally introductory clauses:

One other thing Wordsworth learned in those early years: he learned to know a man when he saw him.—C. T. Winchester, *Wordsworth: How to Know Him*, p. 13.

The war has produced no greater paradox than this: Unnaturalized Bohemians in the United States are technically enemy aliens, because they are subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.—*Saturday Evening Post*, June 1, 1918.

The capital after the colon in the second example is anomalous. So far as pointing is concerned there is only a clause break, but the capital gives its group an appearance of sentence rank.

The following sentences illustrate the use of the compounding colon without clear anticipatory quality:

That hostility between romanticism and classicism is fundamental: we cannot escape it.—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism*, p. 225.

It may be that he is, like Montaigne, a man who has made up his mind not to make up his mind: in which case he has subscribed to the most catholic of all "isms"—skepticism.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature*, p. 6.

In either sentence the semicolon might replace the colon with slight change of effect. Many writers use the compounding colon only after formally introductory groups.

The compounding dash is an abrupt or emphatic mark, properly the sign of apposition or shifted construction.

After a Liberty Loan campaign, a War Savings Stamp campaign—how can it be otherwise? For the stay-at-homes, the noncombatants, this war is one contribution of money after another, according to one's means and capacity for earning.—*New York Times,* June 18, 1918.

Such a condition of life fosters not only thrift and independence, but those neighborly sympathies which are impossible without a certain isolation—it is hard to feel neighborly sympathy toward the party living in the next flat.—C. T. Winchester, *Wordsworth: How to Know Him,* p. 14.

The dash as a mark of clause apposition is less formal than the colon.

Elliptical and Subordinate Clauses

The difference between a full clause and one with a part implied may be simply a difference of weight, not of value. A group with subject or verb suppressed is often more effective than the heavier full clause. "Except in the most studied and formal discourse," says Mr. L. A. Sherman (*Analytics of Literature,* p. 280), "men incline always to disburdened and contracted phrases, not only to save effort, but the better to keep pace with the thought within."

A group which should be pointed as a main clause may be technically an appositive, a participial phrase, an adverbial clause, or other subordinate element.

It sounds like a cabinet minister who has lost an honoured and beloved wife; not like an assassin who has lured *his* wife to a

lonely spot, and there pitilessly killed her.—Agnes Repplier, *Counter-Currents,* p. 16.

There are some men who seem incapable of comprehending the fact that it is the present meaning of a word which determines the propriety of its use; not its past meaning, still less its meaning in the tongue from which it came.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 43.

The typical newspaper paragraph contains from 35 to 75 words, whereas the average paragraph in ordinary prose is from 150 to 250 words in length.—W. G. Bleyer, *Types of News Writing,* p. 11.

In the first sentence the group following the semicolon is technically an adverbial phrase. In the second, the group beginning *not* is in series. In the third, the clause following the comma is technically subordinate. In all such cases grammatical classification yields to rhetorical purposes.

CHAPTER V

THE POINTING OF RESTRICTIVE AND NON-RESTRICTIVE, PRELIMINARY, PARENTHETICAL, AND "AFTERTHOUGHT" MATTER

THE cases falling within this chapter may be classified under two heads:

1. Limiting and modifying elements: adjectival, appositive, and adverbial. Appositives are strictly adjectival in function, but are often treated separately.

2. Preliminary, parenthetical, or "afterthought" matter which cannot be classed as adjectival or adverbial.

Either division may contain matter which is thought to have been transposed from the position assigned it by the laws of nature. The two classes are rhetorically akin, sometimes indistinguishable except by the application of grammatical distinctions which are beside the point; and the same considerations of clear grouping, just emphasis, and good movement are to be applied to them with reference to punctuation. For this reason they will be treated separately only so far as may be necessary to clearness.

I. LIMITING AND MODIFYING ELEMENTS

The groups belonging in this class are those which define or qualify any part of a sentence functioning as substantive, adjective, adverb, or verb. Modifying elements fall into two general classes, or else lie on the border-line be-

tween them: (1) Elements clearly required for definition, or necessary to structure; called *restrictive.* Usually open. (2) Elements clearly *non-restrictive,* additional, or parenthetical; not required for purposes of limitation; capable of being omitted without ruin of structure and without leaving the sentence obviously or painfully indefinite. Usually pointed.

In the following sentence, from page 45 of G. K. Chesterton's *Crimes of England,* the appositive name and the modifiers of *went* are restrictive; the relative clause is non-restrictive.

That great Englishman Charles Fox, who was as national as Nelson, went to his death with the firm conviction that England had made Napoleon.

As *that great Englishman* is indefinite, the name *Charles Fox* is grouped with it; but the relative clause, being unnecessary to definition, is separately grouped. The adjective complement *as national as Nelson* is necessary to structure.

If one writes *I never use a towel, which has been used by anybody else,* the separate grouping leaves *towel* universal. The sentence appears to mean (1) I never use a towel, (2) an unspecified and generic towel has been used by somebody else.

The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive is of the utmost importance, but for purposes of punctuation is not always decisive. The character of a group as restrictive or otherwise does not always determine pointing even when clear; and many modifiers, especially adverbs, are difficult to classify.

In the following sentences groups which seem clearly non-restrictive are properly left open:

Which has proved wiser, as we look back, Johnson who ridiculed Gray's poetry, or Boswell who sat up all night reading it?—John Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle,* p. 66.

Quite late in the Anglo-Saxon period—about the year 1000—there is a poem on an English subject in which this heroic spirit is most thoroughly displayed: the poem on the Battle of Maldon which was fought on the Essex shore in 993 between Byrhtnoth alderman of East Anglia and a host of vikings whose leader (though he is not mentioned in the poem) is known as Olaf Tryggvason.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 38.

Our knowledge of these peoples in the first century of our era is drawn from Roman writers, from Julius Caesar who had fought against them, and from Tacitus, who described them in his *Germania* (written in 98) and *Annals.*—J. G. Robertson, *Outlines of the History of German Literature,* p. 4.

In the last sentence the two relative clauses, though superfically parallel, are treated in different ways.

In the following sentence a restrictive group is pointed off:

We have all of late been made familiar with the somewhat unfortunate remark of an English writer, that the spelling of Shakespeare was good enough for him.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *English Spelling and Spelling Reform,* p. 24.

But these cases are out of the ordinary. As a rule modifiers clearly restrictive are grouped with their principal elements, and non-restrictives are grouped separately. When a modifier is on the border line between classes, the writer must decide the case on its merits.

The following sentences contain modifiers which might be differently treated:

Managers, being the most conservative people on earth, except compositors, will honestly try to convince the naïve drama-

tist that effects can only be obtained in the precise way in which effects have always been obtained, and that this and that rule must not be broken on pain of outraging the public.—Arnold Bennett, *The Author's Craft,* p. 71f.

The modern drama was evolved in Germany as elsewhere from the church liturgy. In the tenth century the Easter and Christmas services were invested with a certain dramatic character; the events celebrated at these festivals were narrated by the priests in dialogue, and even acted.—J. G. Robertson, *Outlines of the History of German Literature,* p. 19.

In the sentence from Mr. Bennett, *except compositors* might be treated as restrictive. In the second passage it would be possible to set off *as elsewhere* and *in the tenth century.* Classification of the three cases into restrictive and non-restrictive would be uncertain or difficult. In such cases the decision to punctuate or not will have to be made on grounds of emphasis and movement.

Other things equal, the open restrictive group is lighter and more rapid. The pointing of a modifier affects at once the movement, the grouping, the distribution of emphasis.

The Frankish Emperor Lewis the Pious is said to have taken a disgust at the heathen poetry which he had learned when he was young.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 43f.

The Frankish Emperor, Lewis the Pious, is said to have taken a disgust at the heathen poetry, which he had learned when he was young. [Three commas inserted.]

The interpolated commas imply—what is not true—that *Frankish Emperor* and *heathen poetry* have been made definite by the context. The first two commas emphasize *Frankish Emperor,* and they subordinate *Lewis the Pious,* at the same time suspending attention upon the name. The third comma leaves *heathen poetry* unrestricted, giving the impression that the Emperor had learned all the

heathen poetry and had afterwards become disgusted with it. The commas also affect the movement of the sentence.

Non-restrictive commas are employed economically in modern writing. A sentence like this looks strange:

> To prevent, therefore, any mistake, on the part of the pupil, as to the meaning of a parenthetical phrase or clause, and to enable him to insert the right points by distinguishing it with some degree of accuracy from the parenthesis, from which it derives its name, we may have to anticipate a little what will be laid down and illustrated in the next chapter.—John Wilson, *Treatise on English Punctuation*, twentieth edition (1870), p. 64.

Where a group is of indeterminate kind, the writer has the choice of using or omitting marks, according to the circumstances of the case. With groups clearly restrictive or the opposite there is usually no choice; but there is always the option of recasting the sentence.

> The chapter in which the error was made has been revised.
> The third chapter, the one in which the error was made, has been revised.

The second form has a non-restrictive group with two suspending marks. Which form is better depends on the requirements of the individual passage.

"Transposed" Modifiers

An adjective or adverb element necessary to definition or structure is ordinarily open, whatever its position. If so-called transposed elements are pointed, the decisive reason is not transposition.

> A man bold enough to try it may succeed.
> A stone rolling down a mountain gathers no moss.
> Three times he attempted the leap.

Bold enough to try it is transposed but restrictive, and therefore should not be fenced off from *man.* Modifiers of *stone* in the second sentence and *attempted* in the third are likewise transposed. In the following sentence a transposed modifier is set off because the group beginning *rendered necessary* is non-restrictive:

In this movement of troops, rendered necessary by the great local success which is causing such enthusiasm all over the world, we see the most important advantage from Foch's masterly coup. —New York *Evening Sun,* July 20, 1918.

The pointing *United we stand, divided we fall* is quite permissible, in fact better than *United, we stand; divided, we fall.*

The normal position of an adverb modifying a verb is near the verb—before it, just after it, or between the parts of the verb phrase, as in the expressions *never moved, came today, has always seemed right.* But adverbial modifiers are often placed at the beginning of the sentence, and in this position may be either pointed or not, according to requirements of clear grouping and proper emphasis. Some of the transposed groups in the following passage are pointed, others are open:

Without membership, it professes to exert great power at the polls. Although little is known of its resources, it is always well supplied with money. In everything except the bullying of public officers it works wholly in the dark. . . .

. . . If any other private or personal interest were guilty of such an intrusion the Capitol would be in an uproar. There would be an inquiry certainly, and there might be prosecutions. —From an editorial in the New York *World.*

The points used to set off or enclose groups which serve as modifiers, preliminary or parenthetical expressions, and

afterthoughts, are the comma, the dash or comma with dash, curves, the colon, and the semicolon. A modifying element is sometimes treated as a sentence, or even as a paragraph. The use of brackets for parenthetical matter is usually incidental to their main purpose, which is to distinguish interpolated from quoted matter.

Open Modifiers

The following sentences have appositives and modifiers not pointed:

We shall then be making that rare advance in wisdom which consists in abandoning our illusions the better to attain our ideals.—George Santayana, *Poetry and Religion,* p. 250.

An experienced writer means a point as definitely as he means a word.—Arlo Bates, Preface to an edition of Poems of John Keats, p. vii.

Reinke the Fox is in disgrace; every animal has some accusation to bring against him, and Brun the bear is despatched by King Lion to Malepertus, to summon Reinke before the court. But Brun is outwitted by the Fox's cunning; so, too, is Hintze the cat.—J. G. Robertson, *Outlines of the History of German Literature,* p. 61.

The first sentence has a restrictive relative clause, the second a restrictive adverbial clause with *as*. In the passage from Mr. Robertson there are three names with restrictive appositives. In the following sentence there are several adverbial groups without pointing:

By joint action these inevitable failures will be considered as they arise, and no Senator or Representative will find excuse for sensation or demagogy except as he may hope to profit by it personally and politically.—New York *World* (editorial), March 16, 1918.

Punctuated Modifiers

Where a modifier should be set off by a point or pair of points, the comma is usually the lightest mark. The dash is more abrupt, the colon more formal. Curves are mostly limited to cases in which the enclosed modifier is felt as parenthetical. The semicolon when used to mark off an appositive or other modifier gives the impression that the group in question is only technically subordinate.

The works of the past, even of the immediate past, are presented to us not in the spelling of the past, but in that of the present.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *English Spelling and Spelling Reform*, p. 23.

The group *even of the immediate past* is a non-restrictive modifier thrown in between the subject and its verb. In the following sentence the punctuated modifier comes at the end of the sentence and therefore takes only one comma:

Footnotes should never be run into the text in manuscripts, whether in parentheses or otherwise.—*Manual of Style* of the University of Chicago Press, p. 114.

In the first of the following sentences the dash groups the succeeding words as being in apposition with the preceding series; in the second the two dashes set off an emphatic parenthetical appositive.

The so-called "list" books, however, are the heavy infantry, the heavy artillery—the main body of the publishing army.—R. S. Yard, *The Publisher*, p. 28.

The haphazard, chance reader, who scans at random seeking only the strikingly interesting or important news—the average American reader—is not willing to spend the time to read through the various departments in search of news.—G. M. Hyde, *Newspaper Editing*, p. 183.

The colon is the typical mark for the end of a formal introductory group followed by an appositive, which may be a series. The nearest equivalent of the colon for this use is the dash.

The required books are as follows: the Concise Oxford Dictionary, or approved equivalent; Snyder and Martin's *Book of English Literature;* and George Philip Krapp's *Modern English, Its Growth and Present Use.*

But an introductory group is often treated as a sentence, the specifications following in a series of sentences. A paragraph may begin with sentences of these types, all introductory but none needing the colon:

He has proposed a truly remarkable plan.
Let me tell you what to do.
What do you suppose he is planning for us to do?
The provisions of the act are as follows. (I cite the official text.)

In the last case the intervening parenthesis makes the period better pointing than the colon in spite of the formal wording.

Curves are often useful for light and brief parenthetical appositives or modifiers, seldom for long groups.

The year of the Revolution (1789) marks a boundary in both literary and political history.
The committee named by the President consists of Messrs. Smith (chairman), Jones, Knapp, and Bowen.

The curves in the second sentence are a convenient means of showing that *chairman* is not in series but in apposition. The alternative style, with semicolon after *chairman*, would be too heavy to use through the series.

In the following sentence the semicolon retains its character as a coordinating point, the succeeding words being rhetorically a main clause:

On the other hand, where words are obviously foreign in character, we can note a tendency, which has been at work for the last two or three centuries, to prefer what is called "linguistic harmony"; to choose, among two competing forms, the one which is homogeneous throughout.—L. P. Smith, *The English Language*, p. 89f.

Relative Clauses

A relative clause may be open or pointed. If the pronoun is not expressed (as in *the note I sent him*) the clause is regularly open. If the relative *that* is used, the clause is ordinarily open, unless in series or some other relation which may require pointing. With *which* or *who* a relative clause may be either pointed or open. The relative clause may be to all intents and purposes a main clause.

"Thou goest with women; forget not thy whip," said Nietzsche. It will be observed that he does not say "poker"; which might come more naturally to the mind of a more common or Christian wife-beater.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny*, p. 42.

But ordinarily the coordinate relative clause takes a comma or pair of commas.

The memorandum is to be handed to Mr. Phelps, who will give you further instructions.

In the two sentences following there are relative clauses with parenthetical pointing:

If a sense of humour forces us to be candid with ourselves, then it can be reconciled, not only with the cardinal virtues—which

are but a chilly quartette—but with the flaming charities which have consumed the souls of saints.—Agnes Repplier, *Americans and Others,* p. 60.

For when he [Columbus] heard the word Caniba (which is simply a variant of Carib or Caribes) he thought that it signified that this savage people were subjects of the Grand Khan of Tartary, whose domains he believed to be not far distant.—L. P. Smith, *The English Language,* p. 200.

It often happens that a relative clause is made into an emphatic terminal group.

Robert Browning established himself and his carpet-bag in comfortable lodgings on the Acropolis—which he spells with a K to show his intimate acquaintance with recent research.—John Jay Chapman, "The Greek Genius," in *Atlantic Classics,* second series, p. 192.

Now and then a relative clause takes rank as a sentence:

Best paid of all the artists are the cartoonists. Which is equivalent to saying that not many artists can make cartoons.—John L. Given, *Making a Newspaper,* p. 246.

Special Cases of Apposition

An appositive group may be an instance, a set of particulars, a quotation, or an alternative name; and cases of apposition may cross the boundaries of series pointing, the pointing of main clauses, even sentence and paragraph pointing. If an introductory remark is made in the form *There are three recommendations which I ask permission to offer,* the following matter may be called appositive whether developed in the same sentence after a colon or in a series of sentences.

Where the appositive is merely another name for the pre-

ceding substantive, clear grouping may or may not require pointing. To write *a quotation or citation* might suggest that the terms mean different things, in which case there would be need for pointing or recasting. But where the two names obviously relate to the same thing, pointing is not required. When Mrs. Atherton speaks of "the heroic or goddess type of woman" (*The White Morning*, p. 186n.), it is clear that only one type is meant. To point with two commas the expression *the heroic, or goddess, type of woman* would be abominable. In the following sentence from a news story in the New York *Sun* the appositive adjectives *standard* and *clock* are so clearly equivalent that pointing would be objectionable:

> The only change made will be in the relation between standard or clock time and sun or true time.

In the following sentences, on the other hand, pointing is desirable:

> It would be unfair to the author to infer that this was nitrous oxid, more familiarly known as "laughing gas."—Edwin E. Slosson, *Six Major Prophets*, p. 73.
>
> The next to the last line in a paragraph ought not to end in a divided word; and the last line (the "breakline") should, in measures of 15 ems and up, contain at least four letters.—Rule of the University of Chicago Press.

The last sentence contains a parenthetical appositive.

Adjectives, Adverbs, and Verbs in Apposition

Though the appositive relation is technically confined to substantive elements, it may be extended to adjectives, adverbs, and verbs.

Matthew Arnold, rather late in his life (in the introductory essay to Mr. T. H. Ward's *English Poets*), shows that he has been reading some old French authors.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval*, p. 9.

The Icelandic histories—including the history of Norway for three or four centuries—may be consulted for the domestic life of the people who made so bad a name for themselves as plunderers abroad.—*Ib.*, p. 24.

In these sentences the appositives are of course not mere equivalents, being rather limiting or specifying appositives. The same thing is true of the verbal appositive in the sentence following:

A dog not only prefers a customary and unpleasant smell; he hates a good one. A perfume pricks his nose,—gives a wrench to his dog nature, perhaps tends to "undermine those moral principles" without which dog "society cannot exist," as the early critics used to say of Ibsen.—F. M. Colby, *Constrained Attitudes*, p. 137.

In these sentences there are cases of clauses and sentence apposition:

That is the first significance of President Wilson's action. The second is this: it indicates that he may be beginning to realize the potentialities of the Saloniki front and its possibilities for victoriously shortening the war, even at this late hour.—Demetra Vaka, "Why Are We at Peace with Bulgaria?" in *Collier's Weekly*, June 15, 1918.

"Perfected good-breeding," says Dr. Johnson, "consists in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners." (A standard that Dr. Johnson himself did not entirely attain.)—Irving Babbitt, *Literature and the American College*, p. 21.

The first passage (second sentence) uses the colon as a compounding and at the same time appositive point. In the second, the appositive is set as a parenthetical sentence.

The Semicolon as a Mark of Apposition

In general, the semicolon is not a mark of apposition. But sometimes it is used before an elaborate appositive group, before *namely* and certain other expressions, or before an appositive group which is felt as an elliptical main clause.

In the title of a book by Mr. W. L. Klein, *Why We Punctuate; or, Reason versus Rule in the Use of Marks,* the semicolon is the boundary between the alternative names. If the comma after *or* is in any way useful, the semicolon may be necessary. But this use of the comma and semicolon will impress most people as being stilted. A better use of the appositive semicolon appears in the following sentence from a *Saturday Evening Post* editorial:

> Congress has passed some admirable legislation; and then there is the revenue bill—a war-profits measure that taxes everything except war profits; a put-the-burden-on-wealth bill that in the clause taxing professional earnings and salaries a final eight per cent exempts unearned incomes, including the salaries of a good many congressmen.

The group following the second semicolon is practically a main clause.

The Case of "Namely" and Related Words

According to Wilson's rule, often repeated and sometimes followed, "a semicolon is put before *as, viz., to wit, namely, i.e.,* or *that is,* when they precede an example or a specification of particulars or subjects enumerated."

To Greece we are indebted for the three principal orders of architecture; namely, the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian.

But recent practice has gone far toward displacing the semicolon in favor of the colon, the dash, or the comma.

There are three genders in Latin: namely, masculine, feminine, and neuter.—Example given by W. D. Orcutt, *The Writer's Desk Book,* p. 10.

As Russia is a country now practically all surrounded by Germans, and these Germans may be assumed to have no present idea of giving safe conduct to any military expedition of the Allies, so-called intervention in Russia means and can only mean one thing—that is, a landing at Vladivostok.—New York *Globe,* June 13, 1918.

In Siberia the mental consequence of the Czarism, namely, intellectual stagnation, has never existed.—New York *Evening Post* (foreign correspondence), July 3, 1918.

After the Peace of Campo Formio only one power remained at war with France, namely England.—Charles Downer Hazen, *Modern European History,* p. 168.

The style with preceding colon and following comma is highly formal. That with comma both preceding and following is almost invariably clumsy. A less formal style is that with preceding dash. The lightest and most logical form is that in which *namely* is grouped with the expression following, as in the sentence from Mr. Hazen.

The style in which *namely* is followed by the colon is recommended by the University of Chicago Press "if what follows consists of one or more grammatically complete clauses." But many newspaper men prefer to use the colon after *namely* only at the end of a paragraph. Where *namely* takes a following colon, the preceding point will be comma or dash.

Before *that is* or *for example* there is sometimes advantage

in making a sentence break. This arrangement and some others illustrated in the following sentences will obviate the stiffness of the *namely* formula.

The collaboration of Beaumont and Fletcher has been submitted to much close scrutiny, and it is not to be denied that certain results have been obtained. For example, Fletcher practiced habitually a very distinctive and original form of blank verse, and one to a marked degree in contrast with that of Beaumont. —F. E. Schelling, Introduction to a volume of plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, p. 8.

The scheme of polity which he [Calvin] contrived, however mixed with the erroneous notions of his day, enforced at least the two cardinal laws of human society—viz. self-control as the foundation of virtue, self-sacrifice as the condition of the common weal.—Quoted by John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 125.

By origin it [*mob*] is not merely slang, but it belongs to a peculiarly odious kind of slang—that is, the cant of the learned taken up by the mass of the people.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 65.

In the second passage there is light pointing even with the old-fashioned *viz.* In the third passage the introductory *that is* follows a dash, which is much less formal than the colon would be.

Adverbial Groups Following Conjunctions

Where an adverbial group follows a conjunction at the beginning of a sentence or clause, there are three possible styles. The adverbial group may be open, or pointed at the end, or pointed at both beginning and end.

Yet in the midst of its urbanity and order forces were gathering for its destruction.—G. H. Mair, *English Literature: Modern,* p. 137f.

Luther said of the people of Flanders that if you took a Fleming in a sack and carried him over France or Italy, he would manage to learn the tongues.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 60.

But, after all, Mill was not of them, and he was not at home with them.—John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 158.

The open style is the lightest, the style with a pair of points least rapid. All three are in good use; and any rule that might be framed for cases of the kind would be deceptive. Though a theoretical argument might be drawn against the second style, with punctuation only at the end of the modifier, it is thoroughly established in modern practice as a good style.

The difference is of utility rather than correctness. The open style, as in this sentence from Henry Bradley's *Making of English* (p. 73f.), effects a rapid grouping of the modifier with the following words:

Literary culture perhaps on the whole conduces to tolerance of certain kinds of innovation in vocabulary, but with regard to grammar its tendency is strongly conservative.

In the following sentence the comma after *acquainted* is sufficient for clear grouping of the adverbial clause:

We in America have had our Walt Whitman, and if there is any variety of "unabashed sentiment" with which the fiction of the last twenty years has not made us acquainted, we are willing to forego further knowledge of it.—Henry Mills Alden, *Magazine Writing and the New Literature,* p. 76.

A precisian might point the sentence thus:

We in America have had our Walt Whitman, and, if there is any variety of "unabashed sentiment" with which the fiction of

the last twenty years has not made us acquainted, we are willing to forego further knowledge of it.

The additional comma emphasizes *and*, checks the movement awkwardly, and gives the *if*-clause the appearance of being parenthetical. The original pointing with one comma makes the *if*-clause sufficiently distinct.

II. Preliminary, Intermediate, and "Afterthought" Matter

A distinction somewhat resembling that between restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers may be applied to preliminary, intermediate, and afterthought expressions. Some are essential to sentence or paragraph structure, some are formally inessential, others are of indeterminate kind. Of course none have any right to be useless.

If a sharp line had to be drawn between these and modifiers, there would be need of excluding all modifying elements (including appositives) which limit a particular part of the sentence. There would remain qualifying and connective expressions belonging to the whole sentence or clause, vocatives and exclamations, when not treated as main clauses or sentences, and formally independent clauses thrown into the sentence. But absolute phrases and even parenthetical explanations may often be classed as modifiers; and expressions clearly appositive or adverbial may be felt as parenthetical. As no clear distinction can be maintained, modifiers may be classed with the other kind of expressions so far as they have similar rhetorical effects.

The distinction of preliminary, parenthetical, and afterthought elements is with reference to position. A vocative ("my dear sir") or expression like *of course* may stand in any of the three positions.

Mr. Klein limits the name parenthesis to expressions without grammatical connection—established, in his opinion, by the presence of a conjunction or preposition. He gives the name "modified parenthesis" to slightly parenthetical matter with grammatical connection. In the first of the following sentences he takes *page 5* as being parenthetical matter requiring curves. In the second, he considers *on page 5* "slightly parenthetical," grammatical connection being established by the preposition. For slightly parenthetical matter he specifies commas.

The author says (page 5) that he did not go to London.
The author says, on page 5, that he did not go to London.

But the distinction is arbitrary. The form *page 5* in curves is more distinctly parenthetical, but either phrase with either pointing does the same grammatical work, qualifying *says* by telling where. A parenthetical clause like *it is said* will ordinarily take a pair of commas, though lacking "grammatical connection"; and a clause beginning with a conjunction or relative may be felt and punctuated exactly like a clause which would be rated as technically independent.

Parenthetical expressions, and similar groups at the beginning or the end of the sentence, are elements not necessary to definition or structure. As a matter of course parenthetical words in careful writing are only in form unnecessary. Parentheses, preliminary expressions, and afterthoughts are only apparently disconnected in sense. They have logical dependence as qualifiers or explanations. Otherwise they should be discarded.

1. Preliminary Matter

Preparatory expressions are sometimes open, sometimes pointed. If a preliminary group is light and its relation

clear without pointing, the effect of punctuation may be injurious. A point at the end of a preliminary group is a suspension mark to be used only for good reason.

A given expression like *now* or *first* may pass from the open to the punctuated type in the same passage; and pointed preliminaries may be punctuated in several ways.

First, the very insularity on which we insisted was barbaric, in its refusal of a seat in the central senate of the nations.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England,* p. 109.

First: Forget as completely as you can all your present notions about the nature of verse and poetry.—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste,* p. 74.

But in the maxim *First catch your rabbit* there would be no temptation to use even a comma. The colon in the sentence from Mr. Bennett is in keeping with the didactic tone of its context.

The following sentences illustrate some of the ordinary types of preliminaries. The point most often used is the comma; but there are cases with dash (or comma with dash), colon, and exclamation point.

Now it is just at this point that I for one, and most men who love truth as well as tales, begin to lose interest.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England,* p. 97.

Now, investigation of the dialect of the romance shows that the language is substantially like that current in Chaucer's district and Gower's.—W. E. Mead, Introduction to *The Squyr of Lowe Degre,* p. lxviii.

Still, this part of their work has never been made their main object, or even a main object.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 122f.

Of course newspapers are the first to spread far and wide the formations which are constantly springing up in a language possessed of vitality.—*Ib.,* p. 53.

Of course, the story of Charlemagne was not the same sort of thing in England or Norway that it was in France.—W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval,* p. 70.

My dear sir, you are mistaken.

My dear sir! consider what you are saying!—Example given by Wendell Phillips Garrison, "A Dissolving View of Punctuation," *Atlantic Monthly,* August, 1906.

Preliminaries are not often pointed with the exclamation mark, even if exclamations. The second sentence of the following passage from Viscount Morley illustrates the usual pointing of the exclamation *why.*

For if we were always candid, always on the watch against over-statement, always anxious to be even fairer to our adversary's case than to our own, what would become of politics? Why, there would be no politics.—*Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 165.

Expressions like *yes* and *of course* may be treated as preliminaries, as elliptical clauses, even as sentences. As such they may be pointed in a variety of ways. *Yes* may take period, exclamation mark, question mark, comma, semicolon, comma, dash, even colon. The pointing will be according to the desired tone and emphasis.

For preliminary vocatives the most frequent point is the comma; but the salutation of a letter may be pointed with comma, comma and dash together, or colon. The colon, often with a supernumerary dash, is the most usual mark save in friendly letters, and is preferred by many writers in letters of whatever kind.

Absolute phrases at the beginning of a sentence usually take the comma.

Other things equal, the simpler form is better.

Numbers and letters in formal lists may be counted as

preliminaries. Paragraph numbers usually take the period. Numbers or letters designating divisions of a sentence or paragraph are ordinarily enclosed in curves.

2. Parenthetical Matter

Parenthetical matter in the strict sense of the term includes vocatives, exclamations, transitional expressions, absolute phrases, incidental explanations and references, and clauses formally independent—all of these in the "intermediate" position, not at beginning or end of the sentence. But no clear line can be drawn between parentheses and modifiers. In the following sentences there are cases of adjectival, appositive, and adverbial parenthesis:

The Raleigh (N. C.) *News and Observer* is controlled by Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Chesterton's most important contributions to religious thought (*Orthodoxy* and *Heretics*) are perhaps the best written of his books.

When the Constitution went into effect (in 1789) the United States became a nation.

A parenthetical expression is part of the thought even though introduced with an appearance of modesty as something to be noticed in passing. It may vary in importance from a page reference to an important qualification or aside without which the sentence would lose its point and flavor. It may be given unobtrusive form for the sake of greater effectiveness, suggestion being sometimes more to the purpose than direct statement.

As parenthetical points are suspensive, they need to be used with care and economy. When badly placed or too frequent they interfere with movement. In the first of the following sentences, from an article in a popular

magazine, the parenthesis is awkwardly placed; in the second it is managed skilfully:

> The result of this general peaceful penetration, as the Germans slyly called it, of Russia appeared in the second campaign of the war.
>
> A man does not need to be the Kaiser in order to perceive that the autocrat who conspires to destroy a brother autocrat engages in a risky business, since he teaches how any autocracy—including his own—may be abolished.

The objection to frequent parentheses in newspaper writing, as voiced in the following words from Mr. E. L. Shuman's *Practical Journalism* (p. 167), arises partly from the fact that most newspaper readers prefer a direct style permitting easy comprehension.

> The purely parenthetical expression . . . should be used sparingly, if at all, in journalistic writing. Editors and newspaper readers have an aversion to long parentheses.

As a matter of course there are frequent parentheses in newspaper writing; but long pointed parenthetical groups are objectionable save in moderation. Newspaper men prefer a direct manner of writing. With a tacit allowance of fewer than twenty-five points for ten sentences, terminal points included, newspaper editorial writers cannot indulge very often in parenthetical punctuation.

Parenthetical Points

Parenthetical expressions are often open. When pointed they take commas, dashes (or commas with dashes), or curves. The most frequent parenthetical points are commas, with dashes second and curves a distant third. Where

incidental dates and references are frequent, curves may be required oftener than dashes, but seldom in ordinary matter.

The parenthetical expressions that are most likely to be open are transitional and qualifying words like *therefore, nevertheless, indeed,* and *perhaps.* These and other expressions of similar character may be pointed or open according to circumstances.

It is perhaps the Spencerian view of art that accounts also for a curious predilection I have often noticed in philologists for vaudeville performances and light summer fiction.—Irving Babbitt, *Literature and the American College,* p. 114f.

A good example of the confusion arising from general terms is the term that is more important than any other, perhaps, for our present argument.—*Ib.,* p. 3.

It is not, therefore, from the quarter of license that any danger to our speech arises.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 85.

Take, for illustration, *narrate.* This verb, as we have already had occasion to note, was once denounced as a Scotticism. It therefore lacked that perfect purity which could belong only to words whose birth took place south of the Tweed.—*Ib.,* p. 195.

There is no safe rule for such expressions as *nevertheless, indeed, then, of course, moreover.* If felt as integral parts of the structure they are usually open. If felt as parenthetical, and if they and the context are worth the emphasis effected by pointing, they are ordinarily punctuated. But each case is an individual problem. Such decisions should be made by the writer, not left to a compositor. The compositor is likely to be busy enough with the type or the machine.

The following sentences illustrate the ordinary methods of pointing parentheses of less than clause rank:

Now speaking seriously, my dear Professor, it will not do.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England,* p. 23.

The Convention affirmed the belief of the French nation in a Supreme Being and in the immortality of the soul, and accepted the confession of the Savoyard Vicar (from the *Émile,* Bk. IV) as the established faith. Skepticism and atheism were pronounced to be aristocratic and not to be endured.—Paul Monroe, *A Brief Course in the History of Education,* p. 279.

Unhappily their works are for the most part lost, and it may well have been that much of their speculation was—like that of Socrates—not written out, but was confined to conversation and oral disputation.—James Harvey Robinson, *The New History,* p. 109.

My dear Professor in the sentence from Mr. Chesterton is an ordinary vocative. The group in curves in the second sentence is lighter with this pointing than it would be with commas. The third sentence is a typical case with parenthetical dashes.

Parenthetical interpolations are customarily enclosed in brackets.

"Napoleon said that without him [Rousseau] the French Revolution would not have occurred."

In the following sentences brackets enclose question and exclamation marks inserted by way of commentary:

"The comma is required [?] to indicate an ellipsis."

"The comma is required [!] to separate a quotation or similar brief expression from the preceding part of the sentence."

A question or exclamation mark used parenthetically in original matter is enclosed in curves. But this type of parenthesis is not often useful. In the following specimen the parenthetical question mark is a piece of clumsy irony:

His patriotic (?) offer has been declined.

The following sentence illustrates a somewhat exceptional case—a parenthetical modifier before its noun as if a restrictive group:

And, in addition to these (perhaps selfish) considerations, we might do them the justice to remember that they are not destitute of natural affection for their wives and children; but that, on the contrary, the safeguarding of the family is, and has always been, a powerful factor in war.—Agnes Repplier, *Counter-Currents,* p. 119.

For long parentheses, especially for those containing commas, the points most often used are dashes. But curves may happen to be better. Dashes are emphatic, sometimes too emphatic. In the following sentence curves are used to carry the reader rapidly over the long parenthesis:

It was this candid, patient, and self-controlled temper that provoked the truly remarkable result—a man immersed in unsparing controversy for most of his life (controversy, too, on all the subjects where difference of opinion is aptest to kindle anger, contempt, and even the horrid and irrelevant imputation of personal sin), and yet somehow held in general honour as a sort of oracle, instead of having presented to him the fatal cup of hemlock that has so often been the reformer's portion.—John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 167.

It is impossible to specify, unless arbitrarily, what parenthetical points shall be used in every class of circumstances. As in most other questions of structural pointing, the writer has to make his decisions on the spot. Blanket rules are misleading.

Parenthetical Clauses

There are parenthetical clauses both dependent and independent in form. A conjunction or relative pronoun may give an appearance of structural cohesion without making a parenthetical clause less parenthetical in effect. Parenthetical clauses are sometimes open; more often they are pointed with commas, dashes, or curves. Commas are the lightest points, dashes the most abrupt, curves the most likely to seem formal or self-conscious. Though very useful for light parenthetical explanations, curves are seldom useful for groups of clause rank.

In this sentence the parenthesis *as it was* takes no pointing:

> The social consciousness was not favorable to it [the idea of progress], being dominated as it was by the religious belief in the degeneracy of a world fallen from grace, and fated to worse deterioration before its sudden end, which might come at any time.—L. P. Smith, *The English Language,* p. 225.

The following sentences include typical cases of parenthetical clauses with commas and dashes:

> His true ambition, and a lofty one it must be counted, was to affect the course of events in his time by affecting the course of thought.—John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 159.
>
> We say that these veneered vandals have the perfectly serious aim of destroying certain ideas which, as they think, the world has outgrown; without which, as we think, the world will die.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny,* p. 22.
>
> The earliest instance I have chanced to meet of it—though it was doubtless used a good deal earlier—is in the correspondence of Southey and William Taylor of Norwich.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *English Spelling and Spelling Reform,* p. 130f.

He somewhere speaks—I have mislaid the reference—of a publisher who was in the habit of speaking about *literatoor.—Ib.*, p. 131.

Some of them are very possibly indifferent; but so far as they have spoken—and many have spoken—they have pronounced in its favor.—*Ib.*, p. 88.

The following sentences contain parenthetical clauses pointed with curves. These are less frequently useful than commas or dashes for clause groups, but sometimes are better.

If Socrates were here to-day, we can picture to ourselves how he would go round "cross-examining" those of us (there are some college presidents in the number) who repeat so glibly the current platitudes about liberty and progress, democracy, service, and the like; and he would no doubt get himself set down as a public nuisance for his pains, as he was by his fellow Athenians.—Irving Babbitt, *Literature and the American College*, p. 3.

One of the most important items that deceive manufacturers (and we must include newspaper publishers in this class) is their failure properly to charge off enough for "depreciation" and "replacement" every year.—Jason Rogers, *Newspaper Building*, p. 100.

Frequent use of curves for parenthetical clauses will usually seem eccentric; but curves are sometimes the most convenient means of grouping.

Neither curves nor the other points are restricted to any particular type of parenthetical clause. Subordinate clauses or independent parenthetical clauses with or without conjunction may be set off by commas, dashes, or curves. The more nearly a part of the main structure, the more likely is a parenthesis to be set off with commas; the more distinctly apart from the main structure, the more likely

to be set off with curves. But a general rule would be a delusion.

In many cases of parenthesis the safe decision will be to get rid of the parenthesis. As a pointed parenthetical expression takes two points, a sentence with two parenthetical points and a full stop carries more punctuation marks than the average good modern sentence. With clause breaks, series, preliminaries, and afterthoughts to punctuate, allowances for parenthetical pointing must be moderate.

Primary and Secondary Parenthesis

Parenthetical matter within parenthetical is likely to be awkward, but not necessarily.

If the primary points are curves, the secondary parenthesis may be pointed with brackets, but more often it is pointed with commas or dashes. If the primary points are dashes, the secondary points may be curves or commas. The secondary parenthetical group, especially if a phrase like *perhaps* or *no doubt,* is sometimes open.

The various expressions criticised by Swift and Beattie and Landor constitute but a pitiful handful of the number that have from time to time been denounced—often, too, by men of ability—as barbarisms and corruptions.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 56.

The two central motives of the piece—love between two persons of unequal (or supposedly unequal) rank, and the fidelity of a woman to her absent lover through long years—supplied themes of which the romancers and their public seemed never to tire.—W. E. Mead, Introduction to *The Squyr of Lowe Degre,* p. xxv.

He sees the world about him, the world at least that has outgrown the ancestral belief in the gods and has not sunk into

frivolity or sullen skepticism, divided between the two sects of the Epicureans and the Stoics. . . .—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism*, p. 92.

In the sentence from Mr. More the parenthetical phrase *at least* is open, being therefore a sort of restrictive parenthesis.

In this sentence from an editorial in the *Outlook* (April 10, 1918) the secondary parenthesis, within a group in curves, is pointed with dashes:

Ferdinand Foch (the name is, we understand, pronounced with the soft ch—*Fōsh*—as a French word, rather than with the guttural ch as in German) was born in the south of France, and is said to be of mingled Basque and Alsatian blood and to derive his name from the latter source—many of the Alsatians who have been ardent French patriots for generations have names which are German in form.

There is also a secondary parenthesis, *we understand*, pointed with commas. The third dash is an informal compounding point.

3. "Afterthoughts"

The term afterthought is a makeshift. It does not mean a thing forgotten until the last second, but an expression of parenthetical character placed at the end of the sentence.

A punctuated group at the end of the sentence is usually emphatic by both suspension and position. But there is an important exception, the *it is said* or other tag at the end of many newspaper sentences.

The French submarine Diane, not having been heard from for a long time, is considered as lost, it was officially announced today.

The vital part of the sentence is put where it may be seen at first glance.

Modifiers and other expressions at the end of a sentence may be pointed or open according to circumstances, pointed groups being as a rule more distinct than open groups. If a dash precedes, the afterthought is emphasized; if a comma precedes, as in the first two sentences below, the greater weight of emphasis is likely to be on the group preceding the afterthought. In either case the punctuation makes the afterthought more distinct.

A man who takes great pains with his style is likely in the long run to have a devoted following, and to get a hearing, even for his indiscretions and ineptitudes.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 158.

I have been accused of being a besotted "Victorian"—a kind of creature which ought to be extinct, very obnoxious to the younger critics, yet still so numerous as to constitute a not negligible element in the procession of our days.—*Ib.,* Preface.

It is not the fact, my dear sir.

Thrice has he ended a sentence with the careless words "and so on," and on one page he has referred coarsely to "the business in hand" and on another he has said he "pitched upon a word,"—as if a gentleman would ever pitch on anything; it is the act of a drunkard or a ship.—F. M. Colby, *Constrained Attitudes,* p. 142.

In the third sentence, the terminal expression is an ordinary vocative. In the sentence from Mr. Colby the long group set off with colon and dash is technically a subordinate clause with a main-clause tag. Like most afterthoughts set off by the dash, it is emphatic.

An appositive group following a colon is not likely to be felt as an afterthought, but rather as an essential part of the structure.

The use of curves to enclose matter at the end of a sentence is anomalous. There is a contradiction between the emphatic position and the obviously parenthetical pointing.

Ko-Ko is at various times the statesman, the poet, the lover, the man of the world (as when he is tripped up by the Mikado's umbrella-carrier).—Simeon Strunsky, *Post-Impressions,* p. 207.

This pointing should be used with caution.

CHAPTER VI

SERIES, SPECIAL GROUPING, AND "ELLIPSIS" POINTING

THIS chapter is concerned with the pointing of coordinate elements in series, except main clauses; with special cases of interruption or suspension, as in shifts of structure and so-called rhetorical pauses; and with what is supposed to be the indication of ellipsis. The traditional rule for acknowledgment of ellipsis with the comma involves a large assumption.

I. THE POINTING OF SERIES

A series exists when successive expressions are grammatically coordinate. Even conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections may be in series; but for the present purpose the important sentence elements are groups functioning as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or verbs. Main clauses in series belong to the section on Main Clauses in Chapter IV.

The whole or a part of a series may constitute an appositive or parenthesis, in which case series pointing will blend into the pointing of subordinate or parenthetical matter.

It is only when one realizes that Erewhon is more than an England in satiric guize, is in fact an Arcadia, that one fully

appreciates Samuel Butler's spirit.—Francis B. Hackett, Introduction to an edition of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon.*

While lashing himself into a lunacy against the French Revolution, which only very incidentally destroyed the property of the rich, he never criticised (to do him justice, perhaps never saw) the English Revolution, which began with the sack of convents, and ended with the fencing in of enclosures; a revolution which sweepingly and systematically destroyed the property of the poor.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England,* p. 86.

The group *is in fact an Arcadia* in the sentence from Mr. Hackett is a parenthetical appositive in series with *is more than an England in satiric guize.* In the sentence from Mr. Chesterton the latter part of the group in curves is in series with *never criticised.* In the following sentence the series between dashes is in apposition:

For all these reasons—because he has given a too truthful and unpleasant picture of himself, because he is full of the most amazing paradoxes, and because it is quite impossible to say that all his messages are truly inspired—Rousseau is one of the most tantalizing forces in all literature.—P. M. Buck, Jr., *Social Forces in Modern Literature,* p. 59.

Series may take the form of emphatic repetition, which may be climactic.

It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance.—President Wilson, Message to the Congress, April 2, 1917.

Force, force to the utmost; force without stint or limit; the righteous, triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.—President Wilson, Baltimore Speech, as cited in the *North American Review,* May, 1918. [Differently pointed in other periodicals.]

False Appearance of Series

Distinctive pointing is sometimes required in order to prevent a group from appearing to be in series with adjacent groups. In the sentence "*The committee consists of Dr. Smith, President Lowell (Harvard), and Major Briggs,*" the curves make it clear that *Harvard* is not coordinate with the other names. The pointing of the expression "*Putnam, Little, Brown & Co.*" conceals the fact that the groups are (1) Putnam, (2) Little, Brown & Co.

A hotel once advertised its golf course in this manner: "The 120-acre, 18-hole, golf course is the finest in America." A theoretical case could be made for the second comma, but practically this pointing is awkward because it makes *golf course* appear to be in series with *120-acre* and *18-hole.*

The Series Points

The points most often used between elements in series, or at either boundary of a series, are the comma and the semicolon. Less frequent series points are the dash, sometimes with comma; the hyphen, for rapid series amounting to word-coinage; very seldom the colon, interrogation, or exclamation mark. Sometimes elements are not pointed at all, especially when all conjunctions are present. But points may be used for distinctness even with a full quota of conjunctions.

Series with and without Pointing

From series it is necessary to distinguish successive expressions not logically coordinate. No comma is needed in *6 feet 3 inches in height* or in *3 years 4 months old.*

Commas would suggest series, which exists rather in such expressions as *wood in lengths of 2 feet, 3 feet, and 4 feet.* Nor is there true series in the expressions *old brick house* or *great naval offensive.* In these cases the adjectives are not coordinate as commas between them would suggest; the latter adjective in each case is phrased with the noun. *Old* modifies *brick house,* and *great* modifies *naval offensive.*

Sometimes there is true series with neither pointing nor conjunctions. Mr. Arnold Bennett's phrase *the dashing cruel wave that rhymed with save* would not be helped by pointing. In so rapid a group, pointing would be emphatic and unnecessary.

The presence of conjunctions may obviate series pointing.

It [a declaration of war] will involve the organization and mobilization of all the material resources of the country to supply the materials of war and serve the incidental needs of the nation in the most abundant and yet the most economical and efficient way possible.—President Wilson, Message to the Congress, April 2, 1917.

But there may be punctuation for distinctness even in a series with all connectives present.

The Kaiser is perhaps the last of that long series of crowned and cloaked and semi-divine personages which has included Caesar and Alexander and Napoleon the First—and Third.—H. G. Wells, *Italy, France and Britain at War,* p. 25.

The following sentence from Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Crimes of England* (p. 40) has series without pointing (*soft-hearted and not unfrequently soft-headed*), predicate series with conjunction and comma, and series apposition with semicolon.

Thus in England Puritanism began as the hardest of creeds, but has ended as the softest; soft-hearted and not unfrequently soft-headed.

According to Dean Alford's opinion (*The Queen's English,* section 193) the unpunctuated form *deep deep sea* is right and the form *deep, deep sea* absurd. But as a rule repetitions for emphasis are made distinct by punctuation. The points most often used within the sentence for cases of repetition are the comma and the dash. Other points properly used at times for repetition within sentence or paragraph are period, question and exclamation marks, colon, semicolon.

The following sentences illustrate the use of the dash:

So soon, however, as he began to concern himself with a wide range of human interests, with the relatively permanent rather than with the episodic and transient, he perceived that general changes are necessarily slow—very slow.—James Harvey Robinson, *The New History,* p. 155.

Humor, it is agreed, consists in contrasts and incongruities, and the essence of Mark Twain's most characteristic humor consists in contrasting this typical nimbused American, compacted of golden mediocrities, against the world—consists in showing the incongruity of the rest of the world with this nimbused American.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 33.

In the second sentence the dash may be called a mark of both series and apposition.

For "rhetorical repetition" some books specify the dash as if it were required. The comma is in fact more frequent, but less noticeable because lighter.

The semicolon is often useful when the members of a series are long, and especially when they contain commas.

If any member of such a series appears too unimportant for this pointing, there may be need to lighten the punctuation of the whole series, with change of wording if necessary. To write "a committee including Presidents Butler, of Columbia; Lowell, of Harvard; and Hadley, of Yale" is likely to seem clumsy. It would be better to follow the usual newspaper style, "a committee including Presidents Butler of Columbia, Lowell of Harvard, and Hadley of Yale." And the light style "yeas 9, nays 5" is quite as clear as the stiffer style "yeas, 9; nays, 5."

But the semicolon is not necessarily heavy. With wording like this it is an unobtrusive aid to rapidity and clearness:

> We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German people included; for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.—President Wilson, Message to the Congress, April 2, 1917.

The colon in series is anomalous and very infrequent. The question mark and the exclamation point as series marks are not open to the same theoretical objection; but practically they are seldom used except at the end of a sentence or quotation. Sometimes the members of a series are emphatically set as elliptical sentences, as in this passage from a newspaper editorial:

> Not one new bushel of wheat could thereby have been produced. Not one ton of steel. Not a pound of cotton.

But more often series in the paragraph takes the form of parallel structure in full sentences.

Series with One Conjunction

Regarding the series of three or more distinct coordinate members with conjunction between only the last two, as in *Rheims, Cambrai, and Ypres,* there is no uniformity of practice. Nearly all textbooks on rhetoric or punctuation specify the use of the comma before the conjunction; and this style is customarily followed in many periodicals and books, especially by writers who are careful of their pointing. The style with comma is also used by some newspapers, notably the *New York Times* and New York *Evening Post.*

On the other hand, most newspapers and some other periodicals print such a series with no comma before the conjunction. In many offices the comma is seldom allowed to stand before the last member of a series, even a series made of long groups, unless the members are full clauses. So inflexible a rule is a nuisance; but practically it is sometimes treated as one of the laws of nature—if the meaning stands in the way of the rule, so much the worse for the meaning.

Fortunately most book publishers of importance either prefer the comma style or use it according to copy.

In cases like these the use of a comma before the conjunction is a matter not of taste but of clearness:

In England, no sooner had the war broken out than the political leaders—Liberal, Conservative, Unionist, Home Rule, and Ulster—threw party politics to the winds.—The *Outlook,* April 10, 1918.

By the same token will she insist on four nights a week out, cold supper every Sunday, and all the beds—including her own—to be made by the family lest she pronounce the work too much for one and demand a helper, plus tax, under pain of black-

listing ours as a "two-girl-job" at all agencies.—New York *Nation*, July 20, 1918.

In names like *Dodd, Mead & Co.* the comma is ordinarily not used between the last two members. This style is justified by long custom.

The rigid no-comma rule is tyrannical; the rigid comma rule is not regularly followed even by careful authors. In some cases triads are stilted if a comma is used with the conjunction, in other cases awkward if the comma is omitted. Either style leaves opportunity for the exercise of judgment. Where the no-comma style is enforced, one cannot safely attempt more than the simplest type of series with one conjunction. With liberty to use the comma, a writer can use a convenient type of structure which otherwise would be unsafe.

Punctuation for Common Dependence

"Common dependence" might be used of all sentence elements except main clauses in series—of adjectives or adverbs modifying the same element, of substantives belonging to one verb, of prepositions governing the same noun. But the common-dependence problem in punctuation is practically limited to two cases: modifiers of one verb or substantive (appositives being counted as modifiers), and subjects or objects of one verb.

In general, a modifying series is not set off from its principal element unless a point is required for clearness or emphasis. To write *a high-spirited, generous, just, nation* is absurd, because the last comma gives a false suggestion of series relation between *just* and *nation*. In the following sentence from a newspaper editorial the comma after *adroitly* is awkward and quite unnecessary to clearness:

When he had committed himself to the struggle the Prime Minister cleverly, adroitly, accepted the issue and forced his old opponent into the position of attacking the government at a critical moment in the history of the Empire on trivial charges made by a disgruntled and partially discredited general.

The comma might advantageously be transferred to either one of two other places in the sentence.

In this sentence the comma at the end of the series cannot be considered either unnecessary or stilted; it is in fact an aid to rapidity:

In edge, in delicacy, in proportion, in accuracy of effect, they are as marble to our sandstone.—John Jay Chapman, *Atlantic Classics,* second series, p. 184.

Common Dependence as Subject or Object of Verb

Where successive groups are subjects or objects of the same verb, the series may be separated from the verb, or grouped with it. The rule that there shall always be a comma if the clauses follow the verb, or a dash if they precede, is obsolete. The rigid application of such a rule has effects like this:

Philosophers assert, that Nature is unlimited in her operations; that she has inexhaustible treasures in reserve; that knowledge will always be progressive.—From a manual of punctuation.

The following sentences illustrate the modern practice in common-dependence pointing:

The character of the binding, the color of it, the style of type used on the cover should all be taken into account and should bear some relation to the character of the book.—J. M. Manly and J. A. Powell, *A Manual for Writers,* p. 204.

When we were thrilled to read how superbly those hundreds died, in the great English way, a man pointed out that they did indeed die in the English way, and that our pride was therefore ill-timed; that all that bravery was wasted; that the tragedy was in the shipwreck of intelligence.—John Erskine, *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent,* p. 21.

They now almost cynically admit that the resolution of the Reichstag, of which we have heard so much, all the talk of no annexations and indemnities, of considering the wishes of subject populations, of spreading the principles of security and freedom throughout the world, was what we sometimes call camouflage.—From an address by A. J. Balfour, as reported in a New York newspaper.

There is no point after *admit,* and only a comma separating *was* from its series subject.

A series of appositives depending on a word like *supposition* or *belief* is like a series depending on a verb:

Here is the casual assumption that a choice must be made between goodness and intelligence; that stupidity is first cousin to moral conduct, and cleverness the first step into mischief; that reason and God are not good terms with each other; that the mind and the heart are rival buckets in the well of truth, inexorably balanced—full mind, starved heart—stout heart, weak head.—John Erskine, *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent,* p. 5f.

Where pointing is needed for a parenthesis at the end of a series, the second parenthetical point will indicate the relation of the series.

Neither the English, the Russians, the Italians nor the French, to name only the bigger European allies, are concerned in setting up a legend, as the Germans are concerned in setting up a legend of themselves to impose upon mankind.—H. G. Wells, *Italy, France and Britain at War,* p. 3.

Summation at the end of a series subject by means of an expression like *these* can usually be managed with the dash or comma with dash. In the following case the dash carries a supernumerary comma.

The winning or losing of a bit of territory by a Louis or a Frederick, the laborious piecing together of a puny duchy destined to speedy disintegration upon the downfall of a Caesar Borgia, struggles between rival dynasties, the ambitions of young kings' uncles, the turning of an enemy's flank a thousand years ago,—have not such things been given an unmerited prominence?—James Harvey Robinson, *The New History*, p. 8f.

The dash is appropriate because there is a shift of structure.

That clauses in common dependence shall be separated by semicolons is a traditional rule which writers freely and properly disregard. The following sentence, from a punctuation manual, is too heavily pointed:

The loss of home and business; the disruption of friendly and social ties; the death of friends and kindred; the endurance of poverty and want,—these are a few of the miseries which war brings to many or all of the inhabitants of the regions desolated by this scourge.

Commas would be lighter and quite sufficient to clear grouping. The comma with the dash is unnecessary.

As in some of the examples above, semicolons are often used between groups in common relation to a verb. Under other circumstances, as in this sentence, commas are sufficient:

They are rejected for the ideals of power, for the principle that the strong must rule the weak, that trade must follow the flag, whether those to whom it is taken welcome it or not, that

the peoples of the world are to be made subject to the patronage and overlordship of those who have the power to enforce it.—From an address by President Wilson as reported in a newspaper.

Suspended Series

A series may be suspended, with or without pointing, by the use of such correlative pairs as *not* and *but, not only* and *but* (or *but also), first* and *then, rather* and *than, than* and *as.* In correlative series managed without pointing the second member may be felt as a restrictive modifier. With regard to the pointing of suspended series there is no safe general rule. With *not* and *but,* for example, there may be no point, one point, or two points.

We still forget that they come not to see but to invent us.—F. M. Colby, *Constrained Attitudes,* p. 204.

Our pacifism (even more than that of the British) was the pacifism of sentimentality and materialistic languor. It was an outcropping not of socialist propaganda, but of morbid optimism.—*New York Tribune* (editorial), April 3, 1918.

It will be all the easier for us to conduct ourselves as belligerents in a high spirit of right and fairness because we act without animus, not in enmity toward a people or with the desire to bring any injury or disadvantage upon them, but only in armed opposition to an irresponsible Government which has thrown aside all considerations of humanity and of right and is running amuck.—President Wilson, Message to the Congress, April 2, 1917.

The length and weight of the parts are circumstances to be considered, but not the only circumstances. Pointing for distinctness may be desirable even when the members of the series are short.

It is from the design, rather than the wording, that the first impressions are gained.—F. J. Trezise, *The Typography of Advertisements,* Preface.

A series may be suspended by a parenthesis:

On Comte's effort to erect a new polity and a new religion, with himself as its high priest and pontiff, nobody has brought to bear, I will not say merely so much hostile criticism, but such downright indignation, as Mr. Mill.—John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 111.

In pedantic usage, however, there is a certain, though fortunately but a slight, degree of danger.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 164.

The pointing of the sentence from Mr. Lounsbury suspends attention too emphatically upon *certain* and *slight.*

Suspended Particles

Punctuated suspended groups ending with prepositions or conjunctions are still used, but seldom with good effect. This device is at once illustrated and characterized by a sentence cited by Mr. J. F. Genung in his *Practical Elements of Rhetoric:*

Elegance prohibits an arrangement that throws the emphasis *on,* and thus causes a suspension of the sense *at,* a particle or other unimportant word.

All that can be managed by this venerable artifice can be better managed otherwise, as in this sentence from one of President Wilson's messages to Congress:

Indeed, it is now evident . . . that the intrigues which have more than once come perilously near to disturbing the peace and

dislocating the industries of the country have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal direction, of official agents of the Imperial German Government accredited to the Government of the United States.

Disguised Series

For the sake of lightness or informality the series relation is often concealed. In the following sentences series is managed unobtrusively with *if, though,* and *as.*

Bute was the figurehead of a group of Tories who set about fulfilling the fine if fanciful scheme for a democratic monarchy sketched by Bolingbroke in "The Patriot King."—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England,* p. 36.

Macaulay's world-wide generalization is very true though very Macaulayese.—*Ib.,* p. 34.

The failure of our intellectuals to visualize this alarming situation and to send out a warning in time to meet it with adequate preparation will ever remain one of the most amazing, as it is one of the most tragic, of all the facts connected with this terrible war.—W. H. Hobbs, in the *New York Tribune,* April 16, 1918.

Correlation with *both* and *and,* or *as* and *as,* may be considered a disguised form of series. The second member of such a series may have the effect of a restrictive modifier. The following sentences are from the *New York Tribune* (April 16, 1918):

He was as cynical as they were in exacting all that it was thought worth while to exact from Russia and Rumania.

There was undoubtedly a time, however, when both Czernin and the young Emperor were almost as eager to purchase peace as Lenine and Trotzky later showed themselves to be.

In the following sentence the correlatives *not alone* and *but* imply a sort of restrictive relation, but there is punctuation for the sake of distinct grouping:

Print depends for its proper effect not alone upon the type of face selected, but also upon its size; not alone upon the type itself, but also upon its spacing, its arrangement, its combination with other types.—Benjamin Sherbow, *Making Type Work*, p. 1.

II. Pointing for Special Grouping, Suspension, or Special Emphasis

As any structural point may be called suspensive, the matter of this section must be narrowly limited. Otherwise there would be need to repeat much from the sections on paragraph and sentence pointing, the pointing of main clauses, and so on through preliminaries, parentheses, afterthoughts, and series. Suspension is therefore arbitrarily limited in this section to the sentence, and to cases where pointing is not called for by the requirements of series, parenthetical structure, or the grouping of modifiers. Cases of suspension, so limited, include (1) interruption not at structural division lines, (2) sudden turn of structure, (3) suspension by the hyphen. Interruption pointing includes the separation of subject from verb, of object from verb or preposition, of complement from verb, and of a grammatical connective from the following link of a series.

The characteristic suspension point in ordinary use is the dash; suspension periods are not entirely naturalized, commas not always distinct or strong enough. Where suspension occurs after a formal introductory group the customary point is the colon, with the dash as an occasional

alternative. The use of the hyphen for suspension is infrequent.

1. Interruption Pointing

Interruption may take place at any part of the sentence, as between verb and object, between preposition and object, or after a connective like *but*.

Then he opens his palm, disclosing—a latchkey!—Walter Prichard Eaton, *The American Stage of To-day*, p. 36.

Those present were: Messrs. Rea, Collins, Pinckney, and Little.

The fact is, I never heard of him until ten minutes ago.

The colon in the second sentence is excessively formal. The comma in the third sentence groups the first three words as being preliminary rather than structural. A somewhat different case occurs in the following sentence, the third comma making the succeeding words a suspended complement:

Here, as always in translating, the one safe rule is, compromise,—and in this the instinct of the born translator is revealed.—F. T. Cooper, *The Craftsmanship of Writing*, p. 265.

The use of suspension periods was once satirized in this fashion by Mr. Don Marquis in the New York *Evening Sun:*

Whenever you see . . . three little dots . . . such as these . . . in the stuff of a modern versifier . . . even in our stuff . . . it means that the writer . . . is trying to suggest something rather . . . well, elusive, if you get what we mean . . . and the reason he suggests it instead of expressing

it . . . is . . . very often . . . because it is an almost idea . . . instead of a real idea. . .

But since suspension periods are used by many writers of high standing, they are not subject to any general condemnation.

The "Long Subject" with Comma

According to an evil tradition the comma is used—"required" is sometimes the word—between a long subject and its verb, or after any subject ending with a finite verb.

This pointing occurs now and then even in newspapers, which are usually economical though not always careful.

As a rule the long-subject comma is awkward. Points setting off a parenthesis intervening between subject and verb are a means of bridging a gap in the structure; similarly a point at the end of a series may be a normal and convenient means of clearness. But a point which does nothing but intervene between elements usually grouped together is anomalous and contrary to careful present usage. Structure which requires the long-subject comma for clearness is usually bad structure.

What was, was.—Arnold Bennett, *These Twain,* p. 371.

If we recognize that whatever is in usage is right, we must be prepared to go a step further and concede that whatever was was right.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 100.

The first sentence is according to the traditional rule. The second, with no comma before the second *was,* is clear and quite in accordance with modern practice. In the following sentence there is a long subject with two commas, but without punctuation at the end:

The very fact that the same word, romantic, is used to designate the wonder of the infinite and the wonder of the limitless shows how easily we merge together these extreme opposites.—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism,* p. 233.

2. Shift of Structure

Where the structure of the sentence is broken short or suddenly changed, the usual punctuation mark is the dash.

To let one's self go—that is what art is always aiming at.—J. E. Spingarn, *Creative Criticism,* p. 120.

Whether it will be followed by a second offensive of equal magnitude, or whether a counter-offensive will drive back the Germans, or whether they will "dig in" where they are and maintain their lines—these are questions which it is not possible to answer as we write.—The *Outlook,* April 10, 1918.

Both of these shifts of structure are technically cases of apposition. So also are the following, which are managed with comma and colon:

To have sensations in the presence of a work of art and to express them, that is the function of Criticism for the impressionistic critic.—J. E. Spingarn, *Creative Criticism,* p. 5.

Life everlasting, eternity, forever and ever: these are tremendous words for even a grown person to face; and for a child —if he grasp their significance at all—they may be hardly short of appalling.—Margaret P. Montague, *Twenty Minutes of Reality,* p. 1f.

As apposition points the colon and the comma are appropriate; but in practice the customary mark of a shift even with appositive construction is the dash.

3. Suspension with the Hyphen

The hyphen is sometimes used, especially in fiction, to indicate hesitation.

At the end of the cell scene [in *Justice*] the younger, who stammers, turned to his elder and said: "It's n-not so—j-j—olly as all that!"—John Galsworthy, *A Sheaf*, p. 161.

The hyphen is also employed to utilize the second part of a compound word for two compounds, as in the expression *out of eye- and ear-shot of the master* or *interrogation- and exclamation marks.* This stilted construction, presumably borrowed from Germany, is seldom used in good non-technical writing. But in a sentence like this, hyphen suspension is convenient:

Open leaders [periods or dots] run one dot to the em, and are cast on one-, two- and three-em units. Close leaders are cast on en, em, and two- and three-em units, and are sometimes used as a substitute for dotted rule.—Frank S. Henry, *Printing for School and Shop*, p. 293.

III. Ellipsis Pointing

As the pointing of ellipsis in quotations will be treated in Chapter VII, the present section is concerned only with the indication of omissions from original matter. And since the marks which indicate omission from a word are partly treated under etymological pointing, the matter of this section is reduced to small dimensions.

"Ellipsis" need not be strained to include the omission of the subject from the imperative sentence, or the old-fashioned splitting of particles ("he came to, and was induced to remain in, our community"), or the everyday use of clipped sentences, or the omission of the relative from such an expression as *a man I once saw in New York.* It is a rash assumption to say that an element has been "omitted." The fact is merely that the ordinary full sentence would have the element expressed. Sentence

words and phrases, omitting subject or verb or both, are frequent and normal.

Ellipsis for Concealment

The customary mark for an omission dictated by actual or assumed desire for concealment is the dash, which may be of the ordinary em length or longer. The style book of the *Chicago Daily News,* for example, has this rule: "Insert dashes of suitable length in 'swear words' or, if the copy has the whole word blanked, follow copy." *Damn* and its derivatives may be concealed, like the key under the door-mat, by the form *d—d rascal, he said he didn't care a* ——, and the like. The name Mr. Brown may be masked under the forms Mr. B——, Mr. ——, or Mr. B——n. Much less often asterisks or periods are used to indicate the omission of letters, in which case the number of marks will suggest even if it does not represent an equal number of omitted letters.

Ellipsis or Grouping with the Comma

The use of the comma for what is traditionally supposed to be ellipsis of the verb occurs in cases of the following sort. The doctrine contained in the sentence from Goold Brown is of course obsolete.

The Comma denotes the shortest pause; the Semicolon, a pause double that of the comma; the Colon, a pause double that of the semicolon; and the period, or Full Stop, a pause double that of the colon.—Goold Brown, *The Grammar of English Grammars* (second edition, 1858), p. 772.

Kindness secures cooperation; harshness, opposition.—Example from a manual of punctuation.

Better the light-hearted unconcern of Mr. John Richard Green, the historian, who, albeit a clergyman of the Church of England,

preferred going to the Church of Rome when Catholicism had an organ, and Protestantism, a harmonium.—Agnes Repplier, *Americans and Others,* p. 128.

It is clear that verbs are omitted—in the sense of not being used—at certain places marked by commas; but whether these sentences are well punctuated is another matter. The pointing of the first is formal, but not otherwise objectionable. The second sentence is hopeless in both structure and pointing. The third is a good sentence marred by clumsy pointing near the end.

The tradition that ellipsis of the verb requires pointing cannot endure examination. Suppression of the verb has been common a long time, is in fact an ordinary means of economy and rapidity. Where the structure is clear, omission of the verb needs no marking.

But the fact is that Homer floats in the central stream of history, Shakespeare in an eddy.—John Jay Chapman, *Atlantic Classics,* second series, p. 184.

The fundamental fact is that for him Scots was the natural language of the emotions, English of the intellect.—W. A. Neilson, *Burns: How to Know Him,* p. 73.

If these sentences were pointed according to the traditional style ("Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, the greater artist"), they would become unwieldy without the slightest gain in clearness.

If a verb ought to be omitted, the omission can always be managed without a device so clumsy as the ellipsis comma. As a rule, a comma standing for an omitted verb will defeat the very purpose of the omission.

The Grouping of Names and Figures

In such expressions as *Nashville, Tennessee* and *April 7, 1918* the comma indicates grouping rather than ellipsis.

Tennessee and *1918* are limiting elements set off for clearness.

In the date style *May 7, 1915* the comma is useful; in the style *7 May 1915*, recommended by so eminent an authority as Sir James Murray, there is no need of a comma, because the figures are not adjacent; nor is there any fundamental reason why the expression *in August 1914* should take a comma or two commas. In a sentence like this the two commas are distinctly inconvenient:

In April, 1918, the United States entered the great war.

But custom is so obstinate that the two commas are usually considered necessary. In this as in certain other matters of punctuation British writers are less conservative.

If an address like *Albany, New York* is written in two lines on an envelope, there is no need of a comma. Grouping by pointing or white space is called for not by ellipsis but by requirements of clearness.

CHAPTER VII

QUOTATION, ETYMOLOGICAL, AND REFERENCE POINTING

With a Note on Capitals and Italic

The punctuation marks treated in this chapter are more subject to legislation for uniformity than comma, semicolon, dash, curves, or the sentence points. Questions of structural pointing are questions of art which cannot be settled by general or even minute prescription. The uses of quote marks, hyphens, the apostrophe, and the abbreviation point also involve questions of rhetorical art, but in a less degree. There must be certain definite rules or there can be no good printing.

But the present chapter is not a compendium of rules. Its purpose is only to point out the more usual customs, with the rhetorical considerations applicable to whatever set of styles one may happen to follow.

I. The Pointing of Quotations

Quotation points properly include not only the double and single quotation marks but also marks of omission or interpolation, and points used with words introducing or interrupting quotations.

The printer's double quote marks are usually two inverted commas and two apostrophes, or equivalent logotypes, single quotes being one inverted comma and one

apostrophe. Typewriter quotes are usually the same in form for both the beginning and the end of a quotation. All of these will be called quote marks or quotes.

Save for a quotation within a quotation, most American printers use double quotes for both citation and special designation. But there are exceptions. The *Atlantic Monthly* and some book publishers employ single quotes for both citation and special designation, reserving double quotes for secondary quotation. Certain other publications differentiate the two kinds of quoted expressions by using double quotes for ordinary citation (with single quotes for secondary quotation) and single quotes for slang, words as words, terms with special meaning, and some other expressions not specifically quoted. The distinction between citation and special designation is convenient in many ways and appears to be growing in favor.

Quote marks are used to indicate direct borrowing of phraseology or to designate an expression as being special, peculiar, or of such nature that the writer using it wishes to rid himself of responsibility. Indirect quotation, as in the sentence *He promised that he would come,* is not occasion for the use of quote marks; but as a matter of course an expression in another's words may be embedded in the indirect quotation, and accordingly credited.

Mr. Lounsbury maintained the opinion that "no rules of verbal criticism are worthy of consideration unless they are supported by the concurrent usage of the best writers."

As quote marks imply that some one is being correctly cited, the borrower should keep the phraseology unchanged and continuous, or give clear indication to the contrary. It is improper to italicize any part of a quoted passage without notice of the fact, or to make any change in pointing or capitals that would misrepresent the meaning. The change

of a hyphened to a solid word or of double to single quotes may be permissible; not so the substitution of exclamations or admiring capitals. Every ellipsis or interpolation should be indicated except where the quotation is confessedly a mosaic. Otherwise the quotation is unfair.

One duty easily forgotten when the writer is in a hurry is to insert the terminal quote mark. The reader should know where a citation ends.

Quotes and White Space

In the use of quotations there are problems not merely of honesty but of design and style. Quote marks are often inconvenient with respect to movement, tone, and the looks of the page.

The objection to the usual form of printing office double quotes—an objection applying only in part to quotes written with the typewriter—is thus stated by Mr. De Vinne:

> When English printers did decide to mark quotations, they refused the French form, and made a very awkward substitute by inverting two commas for the beginning and using two apostrophes for the ending of the quotation. The quote marks so substituted " " are what Moxon calls a makeshift device, for these signs, wrested from their first purpose, are not symmetrical mates: the apostrophe on the five-to-em body is made thinner than the comma on the four-to-em body, and their knobby endings are not in true line. Unlike other characters in the font, they occupy the upper part of the body, and leave an unsightly blank below, often to the detriment of even spacing.—*Correct Composition*, p. 209f.

Mr. De Vinne says elsewhere that "the French method of using a distinct reversible sign for quotation, which is put in the middle of the face, is preferable in every way."

In some modern fonts a special beginning quote is made, with the knobs in line; but the white-space gaps remain.

Quotes and Style

Quotation is attended with certain dangers. There is the risk of seeming pedantic or self-conscious, of emphasizing unduly the form of words, of making a patchwork out of matter which ought to be original.

Self-quotation may seem lazy or self-satisfied. Unless there is clear reason for citing the exact words one has used on a former occasion, it is usually best to cite in substance. When quotation marks call attention to one's own verbal felicity, they exhibit bad taste almost more glaringly than any other device of punctuation.

His "discourteous courtesy," as I once called it, made his presence unwelcome.

Even when quote marks are not self-conscious, they may be open to objection because too emphatic. Whatever the writer's intention, quote marks emphasize whatever they enclose. As the marks with their white-space gaps catch the eye, they effect a sort of grouping that suggests structural division.

According to Mr. More's opinion, Pater was not in any "proper sense a critic."

The quote mark intervenes awkwardly between parts of the close group *in any proper sense.*

The consideration of emphasis may suggest the advisability of quoting in substance rather than directly.

He said, "I cannot possibly agree to your terms."
He said he could not possibly agree to my terms.

The first form may happen to be too emphatic. But if the exact wording is important, direct quotation is in order.

The consideration of emphasis applies, as a matter of course, to quote marks used for special designation.

Mrs. Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin" while "keeping house" in Brunswick, Maine, where her husband was a Bowdoin College professor.—D. C. Seitz, *Training for the Newspaper Trade,* p. 30.

In American affairs to-day the editor does not "commune" with "leaders."—*Ib.,* p. 55.

The unnecessary quotes enclosing the phrases *keeping house, commune,* and *leaders* give them extravagant and apparently self-conscious emphasis.

The danger of using quote marks unadvisedly was once illustrated by the formula under which a country dentist advertised himself: *John Doe, "Dentist."*

Omission of Quote Marks

Under some circumstances quote marks may be or should be omitted as unnecessary, unsightly, or too emphatic. The following are the principal cases in which the use of quote marks for citation or for special designation is either unnecessary or wrong:

1. When the expression is common property. Mr. De Vinne says: "There are phrases in the Bible, in Shakespere, Milton, and other famous authors, which by their terseness have become what may be called verbal coins in the English language, and their origin and value should be known to every reader. To fence in with quote-marks phrases like these—not of an age, but for all time; the knell of parting day; the observed of all observers; to the manner born—implies on the part of the author a low esti-

mate of the reader's knowledge of literature. . . . This remark may be applied to all trite proverbs and hackneyed sayings, which do not need quote-marks any more than they need foot-notes citing author, book, and page." The precise line between individual and common property in language cannot be specified, except that one should label as a quotation any borrowed wording which could possibly be taken as original.

An exception to the practice of dispensing with quote marks may be made in the case even of the most familiar sayings when the precise form of words is important.

2. When the context gives adequate credit. But this is only a "may," not a "must." If quote marks are needed to show the precise limits of the quotation, or needed for emphasis, designation by wording is insufficient. As a matter of fact the majority of quoted passages acknowledged with quote marks are also credited in words.

She did not precisely burn with that hard, gemlike flame which Mr. Pater recommended.—Simeon Strunsky, *Post-Impressions*, p. 121.

It will not always do to say with Shakespeare that comparisons are "odorous." There is danger of being taken for an ignoramus.

To enclose *hard, gemlike flame* in quote marks would give it extravagant and pedantic emphasis. In the second passage the word *odorous* is enclosed in quotes for special distinctness.

3. When the expression is a quotation only in form.

He said to himself, Now I am in for it.

As the Governor of North Carolina said to the Governor of South Carolina, it's a long time between drinks.

In short, . . . the rule should be: Nature manipulated only to discover its best values, and make it tractable.—T. H. Dickinson, *The Case of American Drama*, p. 139.

4. When the boundaries of the quotation are made clear by change of type face, shortening of lines, or other mechanical means. A "run-in" quotation (one which does not begin a new paragraph) need not be in quotes if set in italic or bold-face. Nor is there need to use quote marks for reduced-type extracts set as separate paragraphs, unless in series without clear indication of their origin and discontinuity.

There is no general agreement regarding choice between the run-in style with quotes and the reduced-type style, except that short quotations and quotations of less than a sentence, however long, are commonly run in. But exceptions are made for the sake of emphasis.

In some publications reduced-type extracts are regularly enclosed in quote marks, the marks being used according to a conservative office style, not because needed for clearness. If there is merely a change from leaded to solid type of the same size, without a shortening of lines, there is more reason for the use of quote marks than in the usual reduced-type style.

In the reports of debates and the like, the occurrence of the speaker's name or of Q. and A. (for Question and Answer) before each part of the dialogue will make quote marks unnecessary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Gallinger in the chair). Shall the bill pass?

Mr. CULLOM. I ask for the yeas and nays.

This is the Congressional Record style followed by the Government Printing Office. The following, cited verbatim from the style book of the *Chicago Daily News* (1908), illustrates another way of setting question and answer dialogue, this time with quotes:

Q.—"Who struck Billy Patterson?" A.—"Congressman Hitt."

The style recommended in Mr. G. M. Hyde's *Newspaper Editing* is this:

Q.—What is your name? A.—Oscar Brown.

Quote Marks for Special Designation

Quote marks are often used for expressions which it would be inaccurate to call quotations. Among these are nicknames, misnomers, slang phrases, technical and unusual phrases; translations or paraphrases; names of ships and rarely of buildings; titles of books, periodicals, poems, and works of musical or plastic art; and expressions used with satirical intent, the quote marks meaning "so-called." When *so-called* or its equivalent is expressed, quotes are either used or omitted according to circumstances.

A rule that quote marks must be used in these cases or in any one of them would be misleading, save as an office rule. In the first place, an expression once designated as slang, once defined, or once designated as a nickname, may thereafter be treated as an ordinary expression.

> One cannot plan a life in conventions without cutting out of it many wayward desires and "beautiful impulses." The young lions and lionesses of radicalism are forcing the question upon us whether one can plan a life in beautiful impulses and wayward desires without cutting out the plan.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 119.

The repetition of quote marks when the phrase *beautiful impulses* occurs a second time would be unfortunate. Under other circumstances the repetition of quote marks may be desirable.

Again, there is much latitude of choice between quote marks and italic. In many publishing houses book titles are set in italic instead of being quoted; and in some publi-

cations titles are set "roman open," with neither italic nor quotes. Names of ships are italicized by some publishers, quoted by others, and by others set roman open. Foreign phrases not naturalized or familiar are ordinarily italicized; but foreign extracts exceeding a few words in length may be treated as if English.

For cases subject to legislation, such as the setting of book titles, it is well to follow a single style book. Where one has choice of styles, the consideration of emphasis will often be decisive.

In the naming of words as words the options are quote marks (double or single), italic or other distinctive type, initial capital or capitals, and "roman lower-case open."

Crazy (literally 'cracked') and *insane* ('unsound') were at first milder terms for *mad,* but they now carry the full force of the idea in question.—J. B. Greenough and G. L. Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech,* p. 307.

To the ordinary American the Monroe Doctrine carries with it a certain authority and sanctity. It comes from the word "doctrine," which he associates with religion rather than with politics. A doctrine is something to be believed, and publicly professed.—S. M. Crothers, *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord,* p. 154.

In his writings as in his talk, he was not afraid to be seen for what he actually was; and just as, when asked how he came to explain the word Pastern as meaning the knee of a horse, he replied at once, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance," so in his books he made no attempt to be thought wiser or more learned than he was.—John Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle,* p. 32.

The dashing cruel wave that rhymed with save appeared to me intensely realistic.—Arnold Bennett, *The Truth about an Author,* p. 13.

The preparation for the Protestant Reformation was twofold, and may be summed up in the words mysticism and humanism.—J. G. Robertson, *Outlines of the History of German Literature,* p. 67.

The lightest style, roman open without capital, is dependent on the context. So also, though in less degree, is the roman open style with capital, as in the sentence from Mr. Bailey. The choice of style is a matter of taste and of circumstances. In books about words, for example, the italic style is convenient.

Literary Titles

In the designation of literary titles a distinction is sometimes made between the names of books and on the other hand titles of lectures, unpublished works, sections, chapters, magazine articles, and short poems. In the nature of the case this distinction is sometimes difficult to make. For one thing, "short" is indefinite.

Some titles need not be designated by either quotes or italic, whatever style is used for other titles. It is not good form to quote or italicize the names Bible or Psalms, and there is no need to designate by anything more than capitals such titles as the Gettysburg Address, the Iliad, the New English Dictionary, the Oxford English Texts, the Introduction, the Preface, or chapter names in a series of more than three or four. As Mr. De Vinne has pointed out, capitalization is enough to make the titles distinct without the aid of quote marks, and without their awkwardness. Of the following styles the second is in agreement with his recommendation:

The chapters are as follows: "Some Words to Professor Whirlwind," "The Protestant Hero," "The Enigma of Waterloo," "The Coming of the Janissaries," "The Lost England," "Hamlet and the Danes," "The Midnight of Europe," "The Wrong Horse," "The Awakening of England," and "The Battle of the Marne."

The chapters are as follows: Some Words to Professor Whirlwind, The Protestant Hero, The Enigma of Waterloo, The Com-

ing of the Janissaries, The Lost England, Hamlet and the Danes, The Midnight of Europe, The Wrong Horse, The Awakening of England, and The Battle of the Marne.

Mr. De Vinne's opinion is significant as being that of a conservative and practical printer who was also a man of learning. His chapter on quotation marks in *Correct Composition* (pp. 209-229) is of great value, and not to printers alone.

When writing for publication, one may save bad effects by composing with reference to the styles of the publisher. The following sentences are clumsy because italic type in the one case and quotes in the other are used for two purposes in each case.

The expressions *our mutual friend* and *the two first* receive mention in *The Standard of Usage in English Speech.*

For the terms "suppression of clauses," "decrease of predication," and "weight of styles" see Mr. L. A. Sherman's "Analytics of Literature."

Where one may choose freely among the different title styles, the consideration of economy both of time and money is in favor of the open style, the quote style being second best. This is true of both typography and typewriting. The open style appears to be growing in favor.

Whether to include the articles (*the, an, a*) in quoted or italicized titles is in part a matter of taste. The works with the full titles *A History of American Literature* and *The Social Contract* may be cited in either quote or italic style with the articles omitted altogether. If the precise form of the title matters, the article should be included.

For an account of the Knickerbocker writers, see chapter III of Mr. W. B. Cairns's *History of American Literature.*

Rousseau's *Social Contract* was profoundly influential throughout Europe.

To write "Rousseau's *The Social Contract* was profoundly influential" would be unnecessarily clumsy.

In case the article is expressed, it may be included within the italic or quotes if exact citation is necessary, but often need not be. One may properly write "the publication of the *Social Contract* in 1762" or "the moderate views that Montesquieu expressed in the *Spirit of the Laws.*" To italicize or quote the article often gives it unnecessary weight.

When book titles are written roman open, the initial article is capitalized if exact citation is desirable, but otherwise need not be. When titles of periodicals are cited the article *the* is customarily left outside the boundaries of the italicized or quoted groups. If the roman open style is used, the article need not take a capital.

I saw it in the *Sun.*

The essay originally appeared in the "Unpopular Review."

Mr. Irvin Cobb's "Wanted: a Foolproof War" was written for the Saturday Evening Post.

There are exceptions as a matter of course. Lord Northcliffe's most important newspaper prefers to be known as *The Times* or "The Times"; and a Philadelphia periodical refers to itself in its own columns as THE SATURDAY EVENING POST. The New York *Globe* writes "the New Republic is a poor prophet," but "Readers of The Globe will confer a favor if, etc."

SECONDARY QUOTATIONS

Where double quotes are the ordinary marks, as in most American-printed works, a secondary quotation (one extract within another) is enclosed in single quotes. But if the single marks are used for primary quotations, as in

the *Atlantic Monthly,* secondary quotations are enclosed in double quotes. A tertiary quotation, if the writer is ingenious enough to make use of such a thing and if he can count on his reader to thread the labyrinth, will be enclosed in the marks used for primary quotations.

Mr. Crothers says of them: "They disputed with one another for the sheer joy of intellectual conflict. The disputations sharpened their wits, but they 'got no results.' "

"The orator then proceeded: 'The dictionary tells us that "the words, 'freedom' and 'liberty,' though often interchanged, are distinct in some of their applications." ' "—Example given by the *Manual of Style* of the University of Chicago Press.

The first passage has an ordinary quotation within a quotation. The second illustrates a case which printers have now and then to handle, though hardly for their own pleasure.

If a secondary quotation occurs within a reduced-type extract not enclosed in quotes, primary quote marks are used.

The cry for "sustained effort," later ridiculed by Poe, probably came from the feeling that nothing but writings on a great scale could adequately represent a great country.—W. B. Cairns, *History of American Literature,* p. 159.

The Repetition of Quote Marks

In a continuous extract of two or more paragraphs with which quote marks are used, it is customary to repeat the marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last.

The emphatic fashion of using quote marks at the beginning of each line of a run-in extract is no longer common in books, though used by some newspapers.

The Kaiser means that it shall stick uncomfortably in the French memory, and that when his next peace offer comes France will still remember it. There is also a threat in it: "If you "reject my next peace offer as you did that of 1916, the same "thing that befell the Marne region will befall other regions." The Kaiser is sowing seed.—*New York Times,* June 6, 1918.

Points before Quotations

A dependent quotation may be preceded by any one of several structural points, or may be treated as an open sentence element. The popular supposition that a quotation must be preceded by a comma or other mark is an error inducing a waste of commas. In the following case pointing before the quotation is unnecessary:

Now and then one meets a man who violently objects to being placed and classified. He takes pride in saying "I am not an 'ist' nor an 'ite' and I subscribe to no 'ism.' "—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 6.

If sentence quotations may be so treated, the case is yet clearer when the expression is a mere book title or subordinate clause.

Others agree more nearly with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who says that he [Whitman] seemed, in Lanier's phrase, a "dandy roustabout," and gave the impression "not so much of manliness as of Boweriness."—W. B. Cairns, *History of American Literature,* p. 389.

Throughout his works we find him constantly urging "activity, activity, activity and common sense."—*North American Review* (editorial), May, 1918.

There seems a world of truth in Pascal's words that "reason makes her friends only miserable."—P. M. Buck, Jr., *Social Forces in Modern Literature,* p. 26.

A sentence quotation serving as the direct object of a verb may or may not be preceded by a point. A quotation felt as an object may be grouped with the verb; a quotation felt as being introduced is usually set off by a preceding comma or colon.

A year later, at Bremen, he said, "We, the Hohenzollerns, regard ourselves as appointed by God to govern and lead the people whom it is given us to rule."—David Jayne Hill, in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* July, 1918.

Even the [British] journalists were not neglected, and in a speech to them the Kaiser said: "We belong to the same race and to the same religion. These are bonds which ought to be strong enough to maintain harmony and friendship between us." —*Ib.*

As an appositive point, the dash sometimes replaces the colon after words introducing a quotation. It is more in character when the quotation is introduced unexpectedly.

And all the while the pretty young Americans (why *do* their fathers and mothers let them come over here?) watched the battle with exactly the same happy excitement that I have seen on their faces at a football game; they were all ready to turn down their pink thumbs for a German aviator, only—"Which *are* the Germans?" one said, distractedly.—Margaret Deland, in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* July, 1918.

Choice between the comma and colon before a quotation is determined in part by the character of the introduction and the length of the quotation, in part by considerations of emphasis. Before a long quotation formally introduced, the colon is usually appropriate. Before a short quotation without formal heralding, the comma is usually better. But for special emphasis the colon may precede a short quotation, however light the introduction. A rule specifying

choice according to the mere length of the quotation is arbitrary.

The colon with dash before a quotation is a variant of the colon. The combination is habitually used by some book-publishers and even some newspapers when the quotation is separately paragraphed, seldom before a run-in quotation. According to the weight of authority among printers, the dash is unnecessary.

The semicolon is never properly used to introduce a quotation, though it may happen to precede a quoted group.

Instead of being dependent and suspended, a quotation may begin as an independent sentence even when introduced by previous words. The colon, the dash, and the comma are suspensive; the period is suspensive only in slight degree.

He [Montesquieu] thus speaks of his experiences, and there is a germ of satire underlying the humor: "In France I make friends with everybody; in England with nobody; in Italy I make compliments to every one; in Germany I drink with every one." His appreciation of the wealthy people of his time is a little grim: "God shows his opinion of wealth by the kind of people he gives it to."—P. M. Buck, Jr., *Social Forces in Modern Literature*, p. 37.

In such a State law is no law, for every day may see a repeal of all past acts and a committing of the State to untried novelty. "The natural place of virtue is near to liberty; but it is not nearer to excessive liberty than to servitude."—*Ib.*, p. 46.

The Interruption and Resumption of Quotations

Where a quotation is interrupted by original matter, the boundary is usually marked with a comma, unless the quotation ends with a question or exclamation mark or with a dash. The quotation may be resumed after a comma or other point, in the same sentence or after a sentence point.

"But is it a good business?" they asked.

"Good? I should say so!" replied the enthusiastic youngster. "It is the most fascinating thing in the wide world. . . . Why—"
—R. S. Yard, *The Publisher,* p. 3f.

"Oh—" murmured Mrs. Leveret, now feeling herself hopelessly astray.—Edith Wharton, *Xingu,* p. 9.

"I suppose she flattered him," Miss Van Vluyck summed up—"or else it's the way she does her hair."—*Ib.,* p. 5.

Of the following examples, the first two are ordinary cases with the comma. The third has a quotation break which requires no pointing.

"As a matter of fact," I asked, "do you have many patients who come to be cured of their intolerance?"—S. M. Crothers, *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord,* p. 147.

"Royalties exceeding ten per cent are immoral," Henry Holt is reported to have said.—R. S. Yard, *The Publisher,* p. 29.

"Everybody reads the papers—nobody believes them" a cynic wrote, most untruthfully, for the reader can do little else than believe the paper if he is to believe anything.—D. C. Seitz, *Training for the Newspaper Trade,* p. 82f.

Though most often resumed after a comma, an interrupted quotation may be resumed after a semicolon or other interior point, or after a sentence break, which may also be a paragraph break.

"Quite," answered Mr. Doomer; "especially of late years one feels that, all said and done, we are in the hands of a Higher Power, and that the State Legislature is after all supreme."—Stephen Leacock, *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy,* p. 76.

". . . Often as I stand here beside the window and see these cars go by"—he indicated a passing street car—"I cannot but realise that the time will come when I am no longer a managing director and wonder whether they will keep on trying to hold the dividend down by improving the rolling stock or will

declare profits to inflate the securities. These mysteries beyond the grave fascinate me, sir. . . ." —*Ib.*, p. 75f.

Resumption after a full stop is not uncommon. In the first quotation above from Mr. Leacock the period might replace the semicolon, of course with the effect of giving sentence rank to the preceding words.

Quotes in Combination with Other Marks

Where an end quote and another mark occur together, the usual American rules of order are as follows:

1. The comma precedes the quote mark.
2. The period precedes the quote mark.
3. The interrogation or exclamation mark precedes the quote if required in order to give the extract interrogative or exclamatory character. Otherwise the quote mark precedes.

Their first principle is that nothing which is older than ten or fifteen years can be allowed to count. Otherwise, how could their criticism be "new"?—New York *Evening Post,* April 1, 1918.

But in what imaginable circumstances can you say: "Yes, this idea is fine, but the style is not fine"?—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste,* p. 46.

The two examples are questions about quoted expressions. The sentence following contains a quoted question:

"Has the bark of human civilization sailed so swiftly and prosperously without a steersman?" he asks.—F. M. Colby, *Imaginary Obligations,* p. 210.

The first of the following passages contains a quoted exclamation, the second is an exclamation regarding a quoted expression:

Joe came in after hours one night and was greeted by the guard in the usual manner: "Halt! Advance and be recognized!" In answer to the question, "What's your name?" Joe replied, "Ah, you no guess it in a thousand years."—F. H. Rindge, Jr., in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* July, 1918.

What wonderful soldiers they will make *if*—and the Y. M. C. A. is knocking out the "if"!—*Ib.*

4. The colon or semicolon follows the quote mark unless a part of the quotation. But according to some printers, the semicolon should be included within the quote whenever the extract is in clause form with subject and predicate.

In the following sentence the quotation has no claim on the semicolon, the point belonging to the sentence as a whole:

He [Henry James] had played in his childhood with books rather than boys; he had been kept away from his natural playmates because of their "shocking bad manners"; he had never mingled with men in a business or a professional way; he had never married; he stood aloof from life and observed it without being a part of it.—Fred Lewis Pattee, *American Literature since 1870,* p. 192.

5. Ellipsis periods or asterisks marking an omission from an extract precede the quote mark. Otherwise they fail to indicate that there is an omission. Of course the absence of ellipsis points does not imply that the extract is a complete document, such points being required only when there is need to call attention to the incompleteness of the extract. If the rule of the University of Chicago Press regarding reference marks were quoted in abbreviated form, it would be proper to mark the omission at the end:

"For reference indexes, as a rule, use superior figures. Only in special cases should asterisks, daggers, etc., be employed. . . ."—*Manual of Style* (fifth edition), sec. 232.

6. An interruption dash belonging to a quotation precedes the quote. A dash marking the end of an appositive quoted phrase, or belonging in any other way to the original rather than the quoted part, follows the quote mark.

You have said to yourself in moments of emotion, "If only I could write——," etc.—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste,* p. 46.

"I don't think your preferences will be consulted. But it does seem"—her face fell into painful lines of sincerity—"it really does seem that the sooner the smash of the whole darned thing comes the better. It isn't any easier to pull a tooth by degrees."

(I may say that this thoughtful woman is a doctor, so her illustrations are natural enough.)—Margaret Deland, in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* July, 1918.

7. Suspension periods (periods not marking ellipsis) will serve their purpose clearly at the end of a quotation only if placed after the quote mark. Preceding it, they appear to be ellipsis marks. But since suspension periods are authors' marks not inserted by printers even in deficient copy, they have not been reduced to uniform office practice.

8. The quote mark at the end of a quoted expression in curves or brackets precedes the parenthetical point.

In 1820 the death of Brown and resignation of Stewart vacated the chair of Moral Philosophy; but the electors preferred to Hamilton his friend and fellow-Oxonian Wilson ("Christopher North"), mentioned earlier in this volume as a literary man. . . .—T. S. Omond, *The Romantic Triumph,* p. 172.

9. The apostrophe precedes the quote mark.

These rules, with one exception noted below, are usually followed by a majority of the more careful American print-

ers. As for the rule that the comma or period shall precede the end quote, the University of Chicago Press makes no exceptions, though its rules in general are not specified for rigid application.

The rules for end quotes in combination with other points apply generally to both the single and double marks; but according to the style book of the Columbia University Printing Office, which follows the rule of the Clarendon Press, the order of single quote with comma or period "should be determined by the sense of the passage." The following example is given in illustration of one case:

There are found in the census reports such odd-sounding designations as 'scribbling miller', 'devil feeder', 'pug boy', and 'decomposing man'.

For a primary sentence-quotation enclosed in single quotes, the Clarendon Press style is as follows, the example being given in the *Rules for Compositors and Readers* followed at the University Press, Oxford:

'At the root of the disorders', he writes in the Report, 'lies the conflict of the two races.'

But the same sentence set according to the *Atlantic Monthly* style would be pointed thus:

'At the root of the disorders,' he writes in the Report, 'lies the conflict of the two races.'

There are many exceptions to the customary American rules of order, either intended or accidental; but those who let the quote mark always follow comma or period are with the American majority.

Where double and single quotes appear together, with a comma or other point, the customary orders are as follows:

With the period, the usual order is period, secondary quote, primary quote. In ordinary American practice that means period, then single quote, then double quote.

He ordinarily says, 'To-morrow is Sunday'—that is, he says so if he uses the language as if it belonged to him and not as if he belonged to it. If he chance to be in the company of one who is in the latter unhappy situation, he is not unlikely to be interrupted by some such remark as this, "Pardon me, you should say, 'To-morrow will be Sunday.' "—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 167.

With the question or exclamation mark or with suspension periods, the order is according to circumstances.

"And what do *you* think of 'The Wings of Death'?" Mrs. Roby abruptly asked her.—Edith Wharton, *Xingu,* p. 10.

One captain told me this as a joke on himself:

". . . After I had completed what I thought was a rather impressive speech one of the non-commissioned officers saluted and said, 'Excuse me, Captain, but that man doesn't understand a word you're saying!' "—F. H. Rindge, Jr., in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* July, 1918.

Capital or Lower-Case with Quotations

There is an obstinate popular superstition that quotations, save only short phrases, must begin with capitals. As a matter of fact, even quotations with subject and predicate may begin with lower-case.

It is—or shall I write, "it may be"?—H. G. Wells, *What Is Coming?* (p. 81).

For "the truth is that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage

is only a stage and the players only players": "the delight proceeds from our consciousness of fiction: if we thought murders and treasons real they would please us no more."—John Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle,* p. 213.

The principal cases in which a quoted sentence may begin with a small letter are:

1. When quotations are in series, as in the example just cited, or in the following from page 202 of the same book:

Or take such sentences as that embodying the favourite Johnsonian and Socratic distinction: "to man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded"; . . . or such sayings as, "the truth is that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments"; "marriage has many pains but celibacy has no pleasures"; "envy is almost the only vice which is practicable at all times and in every place"; . . . or, last of all, to bring citation to an end, that characteristic saying about the omnipresence of the temptations of idleness: "to do nothing is in every man's power: we never want an opportunity of omitting duties."

2. When the quotation is informally treated as if an ordinary sentence element. Quotations introduced by such a formula as *in the following words* usually begin with capitals.

It has been wittily said of the insular Briton that "every Englishman is an island." Mr. Justice Darling retorted that "every American is a continent."—Sir Martin Conway, *The Crowd in Peace and War,* p. 6.

Secretary Lane proposes one immediate way of getting busy—that is, support of the bill now introduced into the House "which provides for a modest appropriation for the Bureau of Educa-

tion to begin and conduct a vigorous and systematic campaign for the eradication of adult illiteracy."—The *Outlook,* April 10, 1918.

To quote a writer in the *Independent,* "the week marked an awakening of a professional consciousness on the part of Kansas newspaper men."—Merle Thorpe, *The Coming Newspaper* (Foreword).

But in the following case the length and character of the quotation obviously suggest an initial capital:

Of Rose, the murderess, in *The Other House,* he says the most exquisite things—"She carries the years almost as you do, and her head better than any young woman I've ever seen. *Life is somehow becoming to her.*"—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 254.

Interpolation and Ellipsis

Expressions interpolated in quoted matter are customarily enclosed in brackets. Sometimes they are enclosed in curves, especially the unflattering commentary *sic.* But brackets are safer because unmistakable marks of interpolation.

Even the interpolation of a question or exclamation mark by way of commentary ought to be indicated, the interpolated point being otherwise misleading.

For ellipsis within a quoted paragraph the customary sign is a group of spaced periods, less often asterisks, in addition to any point required at the place where the ellipsis begins. The number of periods or asterisks is usually three. The following passage illustrates the use of both brackets and ellipsis marks:

So, in the beginning, all American newspapers, now more numerous, were exultant. "Liberty will have another feather in

her cap. . . . The ensuing winter [1789] will be the commencement of a Golden Age," was the glowing prophecy of an enthusiastic Boston journal.—A. J. Beveridge, *Life of John Marshall,* vol. II, p. 5.

For an ellipsis of a paragraph or more, it is customary to use a full line of spaced periods; less often a full line of asterisks. Rules for the indication of ellipsis vary considerably from office to office.

Ellipsis marks are treated as part of the quotation and accordingly are enclosed within the quote marks. The abbreviation *etc.* indicating an ellipsis should be grouped with the citation. Otherwise it appears to stand for something the writer has decided not to say. If the rule of the University of Chicago Press were quoted with the latter part omitted, the citation should be in this form:

"Quotation marks should always include ellipses, and the phrase 'etc.' when it otherwise would not be clear that it stands for an omitted part of the matter quoted. . . ."

If the title of the style book used by the Columbia University Printing Office were given within quotes in abbreviated form, it might read "Style Book of Typographical Practice at the University Printing Office, etc."

Both brackets and ellipsis marks should be used with care. If badly placed they effect awkward grouping and so misrepresent the quoted matter.

Ugly thoughts and doubts will arise; and the earth . . . to the mature man or woman seldom remains a place of simple joy and gladness, but the home rather of . . . misery.

There was lacking in [Rousseau] the control of a well-balanced intellect, which might have controlled his capricious and extravagant emotions.

The ellipses in the first sentence and the bracketed substitution in the second occur at awkward places.

Where part of a sentence is left out, the remainder may be united into one sentence with following matter; not necessarily with the next sentence, ellipsis marks being indefinite as to the extent of the omission.

In any case the borrower should see that the abbreviated quotation is a true representation of the meaning. Quotation-garbling is inexcusable.

In cases which do not call for the apostrophe, ellipsis from a word is usually managed with the ellipsis dash. Where a proper name, for instance *Patterson,* should be abbreviated or suppressed, the name may be written *P*—— or *P*——*n,* or may be represented simply by a dash. The length of the ellipsis dash is according to office rules, the two-em length being common.

II. A Note on Capitals and Italic. (a) Capitalization

Capitalization is controlled in large part by conventions varying from office to office. Some publishers prefer a "down" style with few capitals. Others use capitals necessary to nothing in the world except their conservative office customs. The purpose of this section is merely to point out some uses of capitalization, with some of its dangers.

1. Capitals properly used are an aid to clearness. The initial sentence capital or capital at the beginning of a quoted expression is a grouping signal. In the case of single words a capital may contribute to clearness by showing, for example, that *Revolution* refers to a particular revolution, or that *College* has specific reference, the meaning in such a case depending on the context. The expression *a Fellow* may mean clearly a University Fellow, whereas *a fellow* might be misleading.

The rule that proper names and proper adjectives shall be capitalized is indefinite because many words pass freely from one class to the other. The printing-office terms *roman* and *italic* are sometimes treated as proper nouns or adjectives; *president* and *committee* may become *President* and *Committee, eighteenth century* can be set *Eighteenth Century, nature* can be personified into *Nature,* Satan is alternately called *devil* and *Devil;* and such adjectives as *dreiserian* are occasionally formed even from the names of contemporaries. The use of lower-case for such words as *macadamize, bowdlerize, gasconade, romance,* and *jeremiad*—all of them derived from proper names—is familiar.

2. Capitals are used for courtesy or reverence, whether real or satirically assumed. Contrary to the usual Bible-typography practice, some prefer to use the capitalized pronouns *He, His,* and *Him* whenever the pronoun refers to any person of the Trinity, whether a capital is needed for clearness or not.

It is customary to write *the President of Harvard,* but *the janitor of Haviland Hall,* the capital for *President* being out of respect for the higher office.

A reversal of the reverential capital appears in such a phrase as "the badger lafollette," as used in an editorial by Mr. George Harvey. The respectful use of capitals has a natural reaction in satirical capitalization, of which the classic exponent is Mr. George Ade.

3. Capitals are used for emphasis. Topical capitals so-called are capitals marking technical or important terms for special notice.

The three general purposes of capitalization are only theoretically distinct. The capitalization of *Senate* or of a pronoun referring to God may be for both clearness and respect. Similarly the capitalization of terms for emphasis should contribute to clearness. In Mr. Ade's *Fables in*

Slang capitals are an essential part of the writer's resources.

This haughty Harriet had put the tag of Disapproval on the War, just to prove that her perfumed Personality could not be shifted by any movement of the Common Herd.

She was one of those Women that the Minute you meet her you have a Curiosity to get acquainted with her Husband and listen to his Explanation of how it happened.

The dangers which attend the unskilful use of capitals are overemphasis, stiltedness, exaggerated respectfulness, and bad movement. By attracting attention to the words or groups they begin, capitals often interfere with the movement of composition.

(b) The Use of Italic

Italic type, indicated in printers' copy by single-underlining, are mostly auxiliary to roman body type. Where the text of a passage is in italic, the functions of italic and roman are reversed. Italic and quotes are often interchangeable, the use of the one making the other unnecessary; they are not often used together. A point which follows an italicized expression is customarily italic.

Italic type are used in text matter for the following purposes:

1. For emphasis. The use of italic for this purpose is sometimes convenient; but too frequent italicizing may effect sensational or crude emphasis, and may give an air of pedantry or self-satisfaction.

2. To mark short foreign expressions which are still felt to be foreign.

Spelling and grammar, therefore, became as obsolete as the mediæval *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and were reckoned among the lost arts.—A. S. Cook, *The Higher Study of English*, p. 52.

3. To mark upon first mention, but not necessarily thereafter, words as words, words accompanied by commentary or definition, sometimes even letters. For this purpose italic may be made unnecessary by the use of quote marks, or sometimes of capitals.

Evangelical and *sincere* were new words much used by Protestants of their doctrines; and now, by their unfortunate identification of the Hebrew *Sabbath* with the Christian *Sunday,* they fastened on that day the sabbatic law of the Old Testament.—L. P. Smith, *The English Language,* p. 195.

Nor is this introduction of the *y*-element limited to the letter when used alone.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *English Spelling and Spelling Reform,* p. 130.

A word named as a word is sometimes given designation by the context without the use of either italic or quotes. It is permissible to write:

The term *rhetoric* means the art of communication.
The term "rhetoric" means the art of communication.
The term 'rhetoric' means, etc.
The term rhetoric means, etc.
The term Rhetoric means, etc.

The considerations governing choice among styles are clearness, proper emphasis, and consistency.

4. To designate the titles of books, poems, musical compositions, and other works of art. For this purpose the alternative styles are roman quote and roman open. Whatever style is used, it is not necessary to quote or italicize Old Testament, Iliad, Seventh of March Speech, Introduction, or Sistine Madonna.

5. According to the styles of some publishers, for the names of ships and for *sic, i. e., e. g.,* and some other expressions.

6. For special editorial purposes. In the most familiar version of the Bible it has been customary to use italic for words not directly represented in the original.

7. Sometimes for prefaces, introductions, or other minor parts of a book. In such a passage roman type may be used for emphasis or special designation.

Save for emphasis-italic, one may save trouble by following a good style book. The use of italic for emphasis is a matter of taste, the safe decision in doubtful cases being against italicizing.

III. Abbreviation and Etymological Pointing

The marks included here are those, except the dash and quote marks, which designate a word as being abbreviated, plural or genitive, extemporaneous or imperfectly coalesced, or divided.

The name etymological pointing might be applied to the use of quotes for special designation and of the dash for ellipsis; but to save repetition, quotes and dashes will be omitted from this section. Under these limitations, the marks used for abbreviation and etymological pointing are (1) the period, (2) the division hyphen, (3) the compounding hyphen, (4) the apostrophe, (5) brackets or curves enclosing letters for designation as doubtful, wrong, or interpolated. This use of curves and brackets is too special or infrequent to require more than mention.

(a) The Abbreviation Period

According to the New English Dictionary an abbreviation is "a shortened form of a spoken word, or written symbol; a part of a word or symbol standing for the whole." A distinction between abbreviation and contraction would

not be useful for the present purpose even if definite. *Wm.* for *William* and *advt.* for *advertisement* are most conveniently called abbreviations although shortened by omission within.

If *Thos.* stands for *Thomas,* the shortened form takes the abbreviation period. If Thomas is called Tom by his friends, *Tom* is not an abbreviation but an alternative name. Nor is *soph* an abbreviation when used as campus slang, though it may properly appear as *soph.* in a table of courses in the college catalogue. A word is not an abbreviation because derived from a longer word, as *cab* is derived from *cabriolet* or *bus* from *omnibus,* the derivation being relevant only so far as the longer form is remembered with the shorter one. Where *bus* is written *'bus* (given as an alternative form by the Concise Oxford Dictionary), the apostrophe is a reminder of the longer form.

A given form may be set alternately as an abbreviation and as a word. *Per cent* appears with no period in certain books and newspapers, with the abbreviation point in other publications no less carefully printed. The form without the period is obviously more economical, and is justified by the familiarity of the expression. The fact that *cent* is short for *centum* probably does not occur to more than one in five of the people who have occasion to write it.

A number in place of a word, like 20 for *twenty,* is not an abbreviation. It is a symbol in figures instead of a symbol in letters.

Roman ordinals such as *XV* in the name *Louis XV* are sometimes treated as abbreviations, but are more often set without the abbreviation point.

Even syllables are sometimes treated as words, as in the following sentence from Mr. L. P. Smith's *English Language* (p. 87):

We form adjectives, too, in *al, ous, ose, ese, ary, able,* etc.; verbs in *fy, ate, ize,* and *ish.*

In like manner it is quite permissible to use *ism* and *ite* as words, meaning "creed or programme" and "adherent of a definite doctrine or policy."

Since there is no generally effective legislation in cases on the border-line between words and abbreviations, the obvious thing is to follow in general the practice of a single style book except where there is good reason for change.

Whether words shall be abbreviated or not is a question of taste and occasion. The style book of the Columbia University Printing Office says in regard to this: "In text matter abbreviations should be avoided. They are suitable in detailed, commercial, or technical matter but not in printing of a formal nature." In footnotes, bibliographies, tables, and memoranda, abbreviations may be an aid to clearness, besides being economical.

Where an abbreviation is followed by a colon, there is good authority for omitting the abbreviation point; and where an abbreviation point occurs at a break which would normally be marked by a comma, the comma may sometimes be omitted. Mr. De Vinne (*Correct Composition,* p. 291) gives the following example of a sentence in which the comma would be superfluous:

He was there at 6 p. m. but he was too late.

(b) The Apostrophe

The apostrophe marking the genitive, says the New English Dictionary, "originally marked merely the omission of *e* in writing, as in *fox's, James's,* and was equally common in the nominative plural, esp[ecially] of proper names and foreign words (as *folio's* = *folioes*); it was gradually disused in the latter, and extended to all possessives,

even where *e* had not been previously written, as in *man's, children's, conscience' sake.* This was not yet established in 1725." The history of the apostrophe helps to explain its use as a sign of the genitive, of omissions, and sometimes of the plural.

The three uses of the apostrophe are as follows:

1. To indicate, with or without the letter *s*, the genitive case of nouns, as in *Frank's hat, the children's playthings, for conscience' sake.* Except in a few cases (especially with *sake*) the genitive singular is formed by the addition of the apostrophe and *s*; but awkwardness of pronunciation suggested by an added *s* may call for such a form as *Moses' law* or *Sickles' Corps.*

The genitive plural is formed by the addition of the apostrophe when the nominative plural ends in *s*, otherwise by the addition of apostrophe and *s*, as in *women's.* Genitives of pronouns (*its, yours, theirs*) do not take the apostrophe.

2. To form with *s* the plurals of numerals and signs, of letters ("dot your i's and cross your t's"), of words mentioned as words ("three *very's* in one sentence"), and sometimes of abbreviations like Y. M. C. A. and of "polysyllabic proper names ending in a sibilant," such as *Pericles.* But such plurals as *the Pericles' and Socrates' of literature* (a specimen given by one of the best current manuals) are clumsy forms, of course avoidable by management of wording. Printing offices have to handle such expressions because unmerciful authors sometimes write them.

There is some latitude in the use of the apostrophe for plurals. It is proper to write *the three R's* or *the three Rs, in the 1900's* or *in the 1900s, they came by two's* or *they came by twos.* The forms without apostrophe are gaining ground.

The plural of a proper name like *Henry* is not formed with apostrophe and *s*, but by the addition of *s*.

The Henrys live on Elm Street.

Henrys' (with apostrophe) is the genitive plural of *Henry*.

The Henrys' automobile was stolen last night.

3. To indicate the omission of one or more letters, as in *wasn't, sleep o' nights, it's* for *it is;* often also to indicate pronunciation, as in dialect stories.

The elision apostrophe is often used unnecessarily. *In his teens* should not be written *in his 'teens*, because *teens* is a common noun standing for any one of seven numbers. In like manner it is unnecessary, indeed illogical, to use an apostrophe in such expressions as *the seventies of the last century.*

In forms like *Peterboro'* and *tho'* (for *Peterborough* and *though*) the final apostrophe is usually objectionable because half-hearted. If the abbreviated forms are used, it is better in most cases to use them without apology.

(c) The Division Hyphen

Though the hyphen has only one form in general use, it has two distinct functions. The division hyphen is used for division of words ordinarily written solid, the compounding hyphen for the union of expressions which have not coalesced or which have not been recognized as solid orthographical units.

In preparing copy for the printer there is often need to differentiate the two kinds of hyphens by using a short straight stroke for the division mark and two short upslanting strokes for the compounding hyphen, as in the

New Standard Dictionary. If a word like *courthouse* is broken at the end of a line in manuscript, the compositor should be relieved of the decision whether to set it hyphened or solid.

The division hyphen is used for the following purposes:

1. At a line break, to show that the word so divided is normally a solid word, broken simply because the line is not long enough to hold it.

According to the American system, division is mainly according to pronunciation, etymological lines being followed so far as the indication of pronunciation permits. As Mr. De Vinne has said, "a book is supposed to be written for the convenience of the reader, and not to illustrate the author's scientific knowledge of the derivation and proper dissection of words derived from foreign languages."

The meaning is most likely to be clear when the division is on an accented syllable, as in *founda-tion, con-sonant, etymol-ogy, lexicolo-gical;* but division on light syllables is often necessary, especially in narrow measure. The division *anticipa-tory* is legitimate and may be more convenient than the division *anti-cipatory.*

It is considered undesirable in careful wide-measure printing to carry over a short syllable like *er, ed,* or *ing;* but words with these endings often have to be divided, as *sound-ed, sound-ing, com-ing, bold-er, black-est.* If a consonant is doubled before such an ending, the second letter of the doublet is carried over with the ending: *begin-ning, stun-ning, imbed-ded, fat-test.* In *tell-ing* the preceding consonant is double, not doubled.

In general the endings *ed* (if the *e* is pronounced), *er, ing* are treated as separate syllables, being carried over without a preceding consonant except when the preceding consonant has been doubled, as in *scan-ning* or *admit-ted.* But in such words as *spacing, changing,*

cringing, dancing, the rule for *ing* works badly. The University of Chicago Press, a first-rate authority, has a rule against ending a line with a soft *c* or *g* or with a *j*. It prefers not to divide such words as *spacing;* where division is unavoidable it prefers the division *spa-cing,* despite the customary rule. As between *spac-ing* and *spa-cing,* or between *danc-ing* and *dan-cing,* the consideration of clearness is altogether in favor of the forms in which the *c* is carried over.

If a word contains a compounding hyphen, other division should if possible be avoided; a second hyphen in such a word as *self-sacrifice* or *extra-hazardous* would be objectionable.

In general, careful printers avoid unnecessary, frequent, and awkward divisions, and divisions which would mar the appearance of the page. Any division may be considered awkward which misleads or annoys the reader, or amuses him contrary to the writer's purpose. *Rear-rangement, bull-dozing, prog-eny, struct-ure, critic-ism* are bad divisions; and so also are any possible divisions of *nothing, horses,* or *William.* But in short lines there may be need to divide Christian names, long figures like 200,000, even monosyllables like *killed.*

Details of division may ordinarily be left to the printer, if he is a good printer; for questions of division involve questions of white space. Ideal division may be less important than good spacing.

The trouble and expense of making corrections for the sake of better division will often indicate a policy of compromise. Mr. De Vinne makes the astonishing statement (*Correct Composition,* p. 141) that "the time wasted in overrunning and respacing lines to avoid divisions objected to by proof-reader and author is a serious tax upon the cost of composition—not less in the aggregate than one fifth the

cost of type-setting alone." Clearness depends far less upon proper division of words than upon the proper use of structural points.

2. The division hyphen is sometimes used to exhibit the syllables or letters of a word for a special purpose.

The constituent elements are un-tru-th-ful-ly.

De-liberate is akin to *liberate.*

The Author wises it to be understood that Erewhon is pronounced as a word of three syllables, all short—thus, Ĕ-rĕ-whŏn. —Samuel Butler, *Erewhon,* Preface to First Edition.

The dieresis sometimes competes with the division hyphen in such words as *preeminent* and *cooperate,* which may be written with dieresis (*preëminent, coöperate*), with division hyphen (*pre-eminent, co-operate*), or with neither. The choice of forms in such cases will be according to style-book prescription or individual taste. But such a form as *unco-ordinated* should not be admitted under any circumstances. It looks like a Scots-Latin hybrid.

3. The hyphen is sometimes used, especially by novelists, to suggest hesitation or stuttering.

Panky, hardly lifting his head, sobbed out, "I think we ought to have our f-f-fo-fo-four pounds ten returned to us."—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 241.

(d) The Compounding Hyphen

The compounding hyphen (sometimes in the distinctive form =) is used to exhibit compounds as extemporaneous or imperfectly coalesced. Just what shall be hyphened has to be decided arbitrarily in part, because dictionaries and style books do not agree.

Extemporaneous coinages include such expressions as

the Russo-Japanese War, the counter-revolutionary faction, a ten-parlor-car train, "so-ness" (a humorous or satirical coinage), and *seven-cent fares,* which may also be written *7-cent fares* where figures are better. In the expressions *1914–1918* and *the New York–Philadelphia mail* printers commonly use not the hyphen but the en dash, in the latter case because one of the names is in two words.

According to careful American practice, the important classes of expressions which regularly or usually take the compounding hyphen are (1) compounds with *self* in which *self* is like an object and the other part like a verb, (2) compound numerals like *twenty-six,* (3) prepositional-phrase compounds like *son-in-law,* (4) adjectival compounds of words naming colors (*silver-gray tone*), (5) expressions in which the hyphen is necessary to clearness, as in *re-creation* (remaking), which without the hyphen might be confused with *recreation,* and (6) certain compounds beginning with *ex, pre, pro, ultra, quasi* (*ex-governor, pre-Shakespearean, pro-German, quasi-compliment*). Miscellaneous words usually hyphened include *party-colored, great-grandson* and similar words of relationship in the fourth generation, and words with *fellow-* except *fellowship.*

Akin to the *self*-words are the numerous compounds in which the parts are in verbal-objective relation, as in *hero-worship* and *property-holder.* But short and common compounds of the same type (*taxpayer, proofreader*) are correctly written either hyphened or solid. Choice is according to office rules.

The use of the hyphen to make impromptu compounds, as in *three-to-em space* or *British-Japanese alliance,* is well established. The hyphen enables the writer to turn an ordinary phrase into an adjective, using *large scale* in *large-scale production, limited liability* in *limited-liability com-*

panies, direct current in *direct-current circuit.* Such compounds are used in the ordinary adjective position before their nouns. Changed from that position, they cease to require the hyphen.

The forms *today, tonight, tomorrow* are alternative with *to-day, to-night, to-morrow.* The hyphened forms are more common in books and still current in some newspapers; the forms without hyphen are commonly used by newspapers and are preferred by some of the best book printers. The age and familiar use and the pronunciation of these words all suggest the solid form. If the syllable *to-* were accented, there might be some reason for retaining the hyphen.

Many words like *courthouse, footnote, byproduct* are written either solid or hyphened. Choice in such cases will make little difference save on the score of uniformity.

Some writers are violently opposed to the use of the compounding hyphen. An unnamed "prominent publisher" is quoted by Mr. Charles Francis (*Printing for Profit,* p. 242) as saying: "All hyphens are a nuisance; don't put any in my work except where you divide at the end of a line." Of course all hyphens are not a nuisance. Compounding hyphens properly used are a means of clear grouping.

The hyphen is usually a nuisance in suspended expressions like *ten- or twenty-dollar notes.* It is clearly a nuisance when unnecessary to meaning or consistency. Hyphenation may be awkward, self-conscious, even misleading. When a writer in the *North American Review* told his readers that Germany had been searched for certain materials "with a fine tooth-comb," he succeeded at least in showing that the hyphen is a grouping mark. The compounding hyphen affects the apparent grouping and at the same time suggests a recession of accent.

IV. Pointing for Reference

Reference points, more properly called indexes, are employed to facilitate reference to notes at the foot of the page or elsewhere, the notes bearing similar signs. Marks of reference include superior figures, superior letters, and a series of seven conventional marks: the star or asterisk (*), the dagger (†), the double dagger (‡), the section mark (§), parallels (‖), the paragraph mark (¶), and the index or hand (☞).

Where the seven conventional signs are used, the first note on a page is designated by the star, the second by the dagger, and so on through the series, each page beginning a new series. These marks are seldom used at present where notes are numerous, being too few unless awkwardly doubled for notes exceeding seven, and being objectionable on the score of appearance. They also require to be changed where matter is repaged, whereas superior figures can be used for an indefinite number of notes. In linotype composition much expense may be saved by numbering notes through a whole chapter or article, for the paging can seldom be predicted exactly enough to save resetting of lines. This practice is usually best even in hand-set work.

Where footnotes are few, the first two or three of the series (star, dagger, etc.) are sometimes preferred to superiors. Some books with few footnotes use superior figures, with a new series for each page.

A reference mark in the text is placed immediately after the statement or word to which its note refers. If the index occurs at a punctuated structural boundary, the index customarily follows the point. Since reference marks may be felt as if structural points, they are least obtrusive when placed at the ends of sentences.

Reference indexes are interruptions which should be required to justify themselves. Under ordinary circumstances, the writer should give relevant and useful matter its proper place in the text. He should not use footnotes for display of unseasonable learning. His problem is careful selection and skilful composition, so that his readers may read straight ahead.

If a writer must frequently refer to cases and authorities, he may find footnotes the most convenient device for the purpose. Without them he may have to clutter his text with parentheses.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURAL POINTS, AND POINTS IN COMBINATION

In previous chapters the punctuation marks have been treated by classes according to their functions. The present chapter, necessarily repeating in a new order much of the matter contained in Chapters IV-VII, deals with the points one by one.

For avoidance of repetition, the combination of period or comma with dash will be included under the dash. And since the colon with dash is a variant of the colon, this combination will be mentioned in the account of the colon; necessarily also in the passage (pp. 231ff.) regarding the dash as a reinforcing point in general.

As an account of quote marks in this chapter would have to be a mere repetition or abbreviation of that in Chapter VII (pp. 139ff.), nothing need be said of quote marks except in relation to the structural points. For a similar reason there will be no sections in this chapter on the apostrophe or the two kinds of hyphens. For the apostrophe, see pages 170ff.; for the division hyphen, see pages 172ff.; for the compounding hyphen, see pages 175ff. For reference indexes, and for their use with structural points, see page 178f.

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the character, the uses, and the abuses of the structural points—period, suspension periods, question and exclamation marks, colon, semicolon, comma, dash, curves, and brackets.

I. The Period

The period is the most frequent of all punctuation marks except the comma. Logically it outweighs all the other points except those others which are used to mark the end of a sentence; but its frequency and its lack of suspensive quality make it practically a light and rapid mark, however emphatic.

Comparatively speaking, the period is not suspensive. But it is emphatic because with the initial capital it marks a group as a sentence. Suppose the following passage from Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Heretics* (p. 267) were written with periods in place of the main-clause points:

> There is nothing, for instance, particularly undemocratic about kicking your butler downstairs. It may be wrong, but it is not unfraternal. In a certain sense, the blow or kick may be considered as a confession of equality: you are meeting your butler body to body; you are almost according him the privilege of the duel.

The result will be like this:

> There is nothing, for instance, particularly undemocratic about kicking your butler downstairs. It may be wrong. But it is not unfraternal. In a certain sense, the blow or kick may be considered as a confession of equality. You are meeting your butler body to body. You are almost according him the privilege of the duel.

Every group pointed with the period in the altered form could pass muster as a sentence; but the pointing is unfortunate because it hides instead of revealing the relations of the statements to each other and to the context. So far as the points and capitals are concerned, the groups are of equal rank.

The period as a decimal point and the raised period in decorative printing are beyond the field of discussion. In text matter the period has the following uses:

1. **As a full stop** marking the end of a sentence which is not exclamatory, interrogative, or unfinished. (A sentence, as defined with relation to pointing, is a group either full or elliptical which is given sentence rank by initial capital and by terminal pointing.) But special meaning may suggest the use of the question or exclamation mark in spite of declarative form.

You are ready? I don't believe it!

The period is sometimes reinforced with suspension periods for special effects—often by some writers, never by others.

I looked up a scholar from Yale, Yutaka Minakuchi, friend of old friends, student of philosophy, in which he instructed me much, first lending me a collar. He became my host in Asheville. It needs no words of mine to enhance the fame of Japanese hospitality. . . .—Vachel Lindsay, *A Handy Guide for Beggars,* p. 84f.

In this sentence the suspension periods hold attention for an instant on the last words of the paragraph. Used within a paragraph they are likely to emphasize both preceding and following matter.

The other sentence points are the question and exclamation marks, the terminal dash, the colon with following capital, and suspension periods. Since a given set of words is not inherently a sentence, periods may be said to compete also with points used for compounding, series grouping, and other uses. See especially pages 52ff. (Points and Paragraph Movement) and 67ff. (the Pointing of Main Clauses).

2. **In groups** (usually of three), either spaced or close, **as suspension periods**; so called because they mark preceding matter as unfinished, or left dangling an instant for special attention. Suspension periods may be used within a sentence or as terminal points; in the latter case with or without another sentence point.

"It's begun," he announced incoherently. "The Cossacks are charging the crowds in the streets. . . . Revolution. . . ."—Roger Lewis in the *World's Work,* April, 1918.

"Come in," he said; and as he spoke the droning voice grew still . . .—Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome,* p. 27.

"Live for art! If I had to choose whether I would lose either art or science, I have not the smallest hesitation in saying that I would lose . . ."—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 98.

Theoretically suspension periods are used in addition to the sentence point if the sentence is complete, by themselves if the sentence they terminate is unfinished. Actually there is no uniformity of practice.

Being at once vague and emotional, suspension periods are held objectionable by some writers. But since they are used more or less freely by many authors of recognized ability—among them Mrs. Wharton, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Robert Herrick, Galsworthy, and Samuel Butler—a prohibition of suspension periods addressed to the world at large would be a waste of legislation.

The point nearest suspension periods in effect is the dash.

3. Periods in groups, usually of three, are commonly used to indicate **ellipsis from a quotation.** Instead of periods, asterisks are sometimes used, more often in newspapers than in books. According to a rule sometimes specified, omissions of less than a paragraph are marked with ellipsis periods, long ellipses being marked with asterisks; but

this distinction is not always made or always convenient. A common practice when a paragraph or more has been omitted is to use a full line of ellipsis periods or asterisks. The kind, number, and spacing of ellipsis points vary considerably from office to office.

4. **Period leaders** may be used to guide the eye across a page, as in tabulated lists. Hyphens and dashes are also used as leaders.

5. A single period with or without following dash may be used **to point a side-head** which is not a part of the first sentence of its paragraph. The following example uses the period without a dash.

10. **Attitude towards Slang.** Since slang is not an abnormal or diseased growth in language, but arises in the language just as other words arise, there is no reason why such words in themselves should be condemned. Intrinsically they are not bad, but rather good, in so far as they show activity of mind and a desire to be vigorously expressive. . . .—George Philip Krapp, *Modern English: Its Growth and Present Use,* p. 209.

Where the side-head is an integral part of the first sentence the period is not used.

6. The period may be used **after a section number or letter,** as at the beginning of this paragraph, but some printers rule that white space may make the point unnecessary. Section numbers may be enclosed in curves, especially those which show divisions within a paragraph.

7. The period is often used **as an abbreviation point.** Decision whether a given expression is to be called an abbreviation is partly arbitrary. So far as decision is logical, it depends mainly upon whether the form is felt as representing a longer expression or not. For the nature of abbreviations, and for the use of the period and the apostrophe, see pages 168–172.

The Period with Other Marks

Except as an abbreviation point, the single period (as opposed to grouped periods for suspension or ellipsis) does not enter into combination with the interrogation or exclamation mark, the colon, the semicolon, or the comma. For the period with dash, see page 232; for the period with curves and brackets (the same rule applying to both), see page 237.

With quote marks, the usual though not invariable American rule is to let the period precede under all circumstances. But with the single quote the order is sometimes determined by the sense, the period preceding if the quotation is a sentence but following if the quoted matter is merely a phrase. The distinction is lost on most readers and is a matter of indifference to many expert printers. With the question or exclamation mark the order makes a clear difference.

The abbreviation period at the end of a sentence may coincide with the terminal period, one mark serving for both functions. If the terminal point is an exclamation or question mark, the abbreviation period precedes.

II. The Question Mark

The question mark is used far less frequently by most writers than the period, semicolon, or dash. Its usefulness depends not on frequent employment, but rather on occasional use for the sake of paragraph suspension and interrogative emphasis. The question mark is essentially an appeal to the reader. In the following paragraph from an editorial in the New York *World* (March 16, 1918) the question form is used for suspensive and emphatic development.

It is within the power of either House at Albany to find out precisely who and what the Anti-Saloon League represents. Is it anything more than a self-constituted coterie of bigots and bulldozers? Who supplies it with funds? For what social, political and religious bodies does it assume to speak? The people whose chosen representatives are regularly stampeded by a force as mysterious as it is dictatorial have a right to know.

Interrogative sentences are often useful at the beginning of paragraphs for emphatic introduction of the topic. They are also useful for topical changes and for development.

The question mark has the following uses:

1. **As a terminal mark** for direct questions or quotations, rarely for indirect questions except those felt as if direct. In the following sentences (from an editorial in the *New York Times* for May 23, 1918) the second question mark points the interrogative quotation and serves also as a sentence point.

What, however, is a made-to-order Boswell to do in the case of such a very different Napoleon? . . . As soon as Mr. Rosner has arrived the Kaiser turns to the officer who is serving, if we may so phrase it, as Mr. Hennessy to his Mr. Dooley, and says, "What have I not done to preserve the world from these horrors?" Mr. Rosner duly notes it, retires at the proper signal, and the characteristic utterance is properly Boswelled to the world.

In justice to the *Times* it should be explained that the dots after the first question mark are ellipsis points, not suspension periods.

2. **As an interior structural point**, but far less frequently than at the end of a sentence or a quoted question.

(a) **Marking the end of an interrogative parenthesis:**

The boys of Harrow—or was it Eton?—voted him the finest of poets.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 108.

That Lanier was a musician as well as a poet (is there any other professional musician in English poetry?), and that he expressed his theory in "The Science of English Verse," are facts caught at too eagerly by those who would account for some of his most evidently musical arrangements of words.—*Ib.,* p. 317.

(b) **As a compounding or series point,** the two uses being not always easy to distinguish. This use of the question mark is infrequent. In the second of the following examples the group following the question mark may be called either an adverbial phrase or an elliptical clause.

And what calm, intellectual joy Miss Sedgwick takes in very gradually stripping these goddesses! Where did she learn this particular art? who taught her such a lesson of bitterness?—William Lyon Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel,* p. 297.

The fact is, no such man [as Bryant] ever sat, before or since, in the editorial chair; and in no one other has there been such culture, scholarship, wisdom, dignity, moral idealism. Was it all in Greeley? in Dana?—W. E. Leonard, in the *Cambridge History of American Literature,* vol. I, p. 276.

And the young? how could such a lie as that a chariot and four horses came down out of the clouds enter seriously into the life of any one, without distorting his mental vision, if not ruining it?—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 181f.

In compound interrogative sentences the prevailing custom is to reserve the question mark for the end of the sentence.

(c) Alone or within curves or brackets—brackets if interpolated in quoted matter—**to mark a figure, date, or other expression as doubtful,** or to indicate a gap in the available information.

In 1666 a Virginia colonist, George Alsop (1638–?), published in London a little volume entitled *A Character of the Province of*

Maryland.—Carl Holliday, *The Wit and Humor of Colonial Days,* p. 33.

Thomas Kyd, 1557(?)–1595(?)—From table of authors in G. H. Mair's *English Literature: Modern,* p. 253.

The semicolon was not a recognized stop in England until 1643 [?], hence we may conclude that Shakespeare must have written his plays without its aid.—P. P. Claxton and James McGinnis, *Effective English,* p. 529.

The question mark in the last sentence is not in the text of *Effective English;* it has been interpolated and therefore bracketed. As a matter of fact the semicolon was used by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis* (1593), by Bacon in the *Essays* of 1597, by the publishers of the King James Bible in 1611. It was also recognized by Ben Jonson in the *English Grammar* long before 1643.

The question mark in curves as an ironical commentary is likely to be ineffective, as in this sentence:

He is so fond of doing his duty (?) that I can't get along with him.

The Question Mark in Combination

The question mark is seldom used with any marks other than quotes, suspension periods, and parenthetical points (dashes, curves, brackets). Now and then an ingenious person uses the question mark with comma or semicolon or colon; but such pointing is exceptional and eccentric.

The interrogation point precedes the quote mark if the quotation is a question; otherwise it follows the quote. In the following paragraph (from page 74 of Mr. H. G. Wells's *What Is Coming?)* the pointing shows that the quoted matter is interrogative. The dots following the quote mark are suspension periods.

"Meanwhile," they will say, with a stiff impatience unusual in their class, "about *us?*". . .

A question mark intended to point a parenthesis precedes the second of the two marks enclosing the parenthesis, as in the two examples on page 187 above. But if the question mark belongs to a group ending with an expression in curves, the question mark follows the parenthetical point.

Does he mean the Second Republic (1848)?

III. The Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark has been variously called the note of admiration, the shriek of surprise, the representation of an excited gentleman jumping skyward. The author of *The Queen's English* says in his positive way, "Use . . . as few as possible of these nuisances." But since the exclamation mark properly used is not a nuisance, the injunction is intemperate, though given with the most worthy motives and pointed with the unemotional period. Those who frame prohibitions with regard to punctuation marks apparently assume that there is nothing between debauchery and total abstinence.

The exclamation mark is used, often as an alternative to other points, for the following purposes:

1. **As a terminal point,** marking the end of a sentence or quotation. The group so marked may be in exclamatory form, or may be outwardly declarative, imperative, or interrogative. Question and exclamation marks are sometimes close alternatives, as in the forms *Isn't it fine?* and *Isn't it fine!* Either pointing calls on the reader to estimate the situation.

Pretty work the elders make of explaining it! They talk about style, character-drawing, the "epic" of pioneer life, and they attribute to this most popular yarn-spinner literary virtues no more appropriate to him than to the graven images of Chingachgook that used to stand before the tobacco shops. Style? His style is one of the obstacles that the story plows through, like Bumppo shouldering through underbrush. Listen to this! [A quotation from Cooper follows.]—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 37.

May it not be so in this case? Consider! We have just reversed our traditional Eastern policy to accommodate Japan; we have acknowledged the rightfulness of her claim to special privileges in China, without consulting China and against China's protest; surely Japan cannot be ungrateful for the one great concession which she has sought in vain for years.—*North American Review,* January, 1918.

In the two passages the exclamatory sentences are useful for variation of tone and emphasis.

2. Infrequently **as an interior structural mark** for compounding, for series, and for the emphatic pointing of preliminary or parenthetical matter, including vocatives. The following sentence has specimens of exclamation marks for both main-clause breaks and emphatic vocatives.

"Boy!" said the famous master, James Boyer, to little Samuel Coleridge when he was crying, the first day of his return after the holidays, "Boy! the school is your father! Boy! the school is your mother! Boy! the school is your brother! the school is your sister! the school is your first cousin, and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations! Let's have no more crying."—Percy H. Boynton, *London in English Literature,* p. 207.

But this arrangement is exceptional. Much oftener the exclamation mark is saved for the end of the sentence, or else the successive statements are pointed as sentences.

Where the exclamation mark belonging to a quotation comes at a clause break, it may serve also as a compounding point.

Hanky for a time continued to foam at the mouth and roar out, "Tear him to pieces! burn him alive!" but when he saw that there was no further hope of getting the people to obey him, he collapsed on to a seat in his pulpit, mopped his bald head, and consoled himself with a great pinch of a powder which corresponds very closely to our own snuff.—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited,* p. 211.

The pointing of preliminary matter with the exclamation mark is exceptional. Even such expressions as *Oh* and *Alas* do not necessarily take the exclamation mark. In the great majority of cases the exclamation mark occurs at the end of a quotation or sentence. In this paragraph from *A Sheaf,* by John Galsworthy (p. 220), the exclamatory vocatives are treated as sentences:

Great and touching comrade! Clear, invincible France! Today, in your grave chivalry, you were never so high, so desirable, so true to yourself and to Humanity!

The use of the exclamation point at the end of parenthetical matter is the most common use within the sentence save for the pointing of quoted matter.

The contribution, as it was so politely termed—war having need of so many euphemisms!—was subsequently reduced to forty-five million francs.—Brand Whitlock, "Belgium under the German Heel," in *Everybody's Magazine* for June, 1918.

3. The exclamation mark is sometimes used between curves to mark an expression as unusual or ironical, or is interpolated within brackets (less properly within curves)

as a commentary on quoted matter. The exclamation mark in the first sentence following is an unsuccessful piece of irony.

His prudent and able (!) management saved only the remnants from destruction.

Three volumes of unimpeachable poetry [!] have been written in America: "Leaves of Grass," the thin volume of Poe, and the poetry of Sidney Lanier.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 309.

The exclamation mark is shown by the brackets to be an interpolation.

The Exclamation Mark with Other Points

The exclamation mark may occur with ellipsis periods or asterisks, with suspension periods, with parenthetical points (dashes, curves, brackets), sometimes with the dash; almost never with colon, semicolon, or comma. Ellipsis periods, suspension periods, or the dash may precede or follow according to circumstances. With parenthetical points the exclamation mark precedes if intended to point the parenthesis, but follows if belonging to a group containing the parenthesis. With quote marks the exclamation point precedes or follows according to the meaning, preceding the quote if the quotation is exclamatory. The principles of order are the same as for the question mark.

IV. The Colon

The colon is usually an equality mark with emphasis mainly on the explanation, quotation, or other following matter. Though still used by many writers as a compounding point no more anticipatory than the semicolon, it is

most often a mark of anticipation introducing an extract, a list, or matter of any sort for which definite preparation has been made. The colon is ordinarily the most formal of all points, but varies in effect with the wording. For this reason it is sometimes light, though usually emphatic.

The compounding colon is used by so few American writers as to be in some danger of extinction. But the American minority is of respectable strength, and is reinforced by the example of British writers, who in general are less restricted by rules and journalistic conventions than their American contemporaries. The question whether to use the compounding colon is a question of utility rather than correctness. If the colon is useful for clearness and good movement, there is good reason and authority for using it. Save for effects on movement and emphasis, with incidental effects in the direction of variety, there is no function of the compounding colon which cannot be performed by one of the other points; but some first-rate writers appear to consider the exceptions important.

The colon in text matter has the following uses:

1. **As an anticipatory point,** especially though not always after formally introductory wording. The matter so introduced may be a quotation, a list, an appositive or appositive series, a salutation (*Dear Sir* or the like), or other matter. The nearest equivalent of the colon in this use is the dash. The anticipatory colon may be used at the end of a paragraph to suspend attention upon a following paragraph or series.

The colon may replace the period at the end of a sentence introducing the topic of a passage. As the colon so used is strongly suspensive, the presumption is in favor of the period. In the following case the colon-pointed words introduce a passage of five sentences with two paragraph breaks.

Here is a case in point: An underwear house in New York sold a bill of goods to a storekeeper in Milan. He ordered from sample and the firm's agent demanded that the draft be attached to the bill of lading. The buyer refused to agree to these terms, on the ground that the shipment might not be up to the sample.

"But you know our name," said the salesman.

"Then I suggest that you find out something about mine for a change!" said the indignant Italian as he canceled the order.—Isaac F. Marcosson, in the *Saturday Evening Post* for March 9, 1918, p. 101.

The expression *Here is a case in point* might end with a period; it is no more definitely introductory than many ordinary topical sentences. For example, the first three sentences of a paragraph on page 244 of Mr. De Vinne's *Correct Composition* are pointed as follows, the introductory group taking the period.

Two systems of punctuation are in use. One may be called the close or stiff, and the other the open or easy system. For all ordinary descriptive writing the open or easy system, which teaches that points be used sparingly, is in most favor, but the close or stiff system cannot be discarded.

According to both logic and the weight of good usage, the period is preferable when the matter introduced is developed through several sentences. If the development is completed within a single sentence, the colon has more justification.

An introductory clause with colon is sometimes followed in the same paragraph by a small letter, sometimes by a capital. There is no fixed rule. The general custom of compound sentences suggests a small letter unless the following word would be capitalized without regard to the clause break. If the colon suspends a series of sentences, the first sentence naturally begins with a capital. But

apart from quotations, colon and following capital are incongruous.

A subordinate group following a colon and standing in apposition to the preceding words will usually begin with a small letter. In the first of the following examples the colon is an informal appositional point; in the second it is formal by virtue of the wording.

In the present war this spirit amounts to a cool and set resolution that the enemy must and shall be destroyed: a conviction far transcending the personal risks and wrongs and sensibilities of the soldier.—From an editorial in the New York *Evening Sun.*

A reading public and a theatre public differ in this: that what the reader loses he may regain by turning back, but what the audience misses is wholly lost, unless, by chance, repetition brings it further on in the development of the plot.—Montrose J. Moses, *The American Dramatist,* p. 19.

In such sentences there is no need to suppose with certain textbook writers that a *namely* has been omitted. In all probability the use of so formal a word was not considered.

Before *namely* with an appositive not separately paragraphed, the options are comma, semicolon, colon, dash. According to the weight of current textbook authority, *namely* should be preceded by colon or dash and followed by the comma. (See pages 98ff.) At the end of a paragraph, *namely* is usually preceded by a comma and followed by a colon or dash.

The rules for *namely* are generally applicable to *as, to wit,* and similar expressions. But some of them are informal enough to permit lighter punctuation.

2. The colon is sometimes used **between main clauses** without clear anticipatory quality, or it may be at once anticipatory and compounding.

Those who know best what it is like abhor its every aspect: many of them are fighting with the splendid faith that they are giving their lives to end War, not just this war.—Robert Herrick, in the *Dial,* February 14, 1918.

We are more than doubtful about the status of Washington: he was the Father of his Country, but he lacked a certain indispensable tang.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 26.

For definitions are very dreadful things: they do the two things that most men, especially comfortable men, cannot endure. They fight; and they fight fair.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Utopia of Usurers,* p. 36.

For that source we must go back to the remote beginnings of our era, and look into the obscure mingling of Oriental and Occidental civilization which followed the invasion of Alexander's army into Asia, and which, under the all-merging sway of the Roman Empire, created a new faith and a new world: more definitely, we must look into the confluence of Eastern religion and Western philosophy.—Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism,* p. 20.

In the last example, the colon might be replaced by the period. Such decisions are a matter of taste.

The compounding colon is sometimes used before such connectives as *but* and *for;* much oftener in the absence of a conjunction.

Such a tribute by boys to intellectual superiority was less rare in those days than it has become since: but it would not be easy to find a parallel to it at any time.—John Bailey, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle,* p. 15.

The colon is occasionally used between members of a clause series:

For if a true novel be a good story well told, it is certain that the majority of so-called novels are not stories at all: of

the saving remnant, only a few are good stories: and still fewer are well told.—Williams Lyon Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel,* p. 13.

To most editorial writers this use of the colon would no doubt seem eccentric.

3. The colon has certain **arbitrary or semi-mechanical uses** which may occur in straight matter, as in scriptural and literary references, expressions of time, or bibliographical entries: *Matthew 1: 4–8; "The Tempest," I.i; 11: 30 in the morning* (alternative with 11.30); *"The Writer's Desk Book," New York: Stokes.*

The Colon with Other Points

The combination of colon with dash is alternative with the colon. This combination is often used before a quotation or a series of particulars separately paragraphed, or after the salutation in a letter. The colon and dash together accomplish no more than the colon alone; but the colon-dash combination is regularly used before a paragraphed quotation in some newspaper offices and by certain book-publishers of the highest standing.

When the colon occurs with a terminal quote mark, the colon follows the quote unless a part of the extract.

V. The Semicolon

The semicolon is the most clearly marked balancing or coordinating point. For antithesis and for coordinate members in series other marks are used, but no other is so clearly specialized. The semicolon is not a general-utility point like the comma, a parenthetical point like the comma or dash, or a formal apposition mark like the colon. It

may be used between groups in apposition or between noun and modifier, but with the suggestion that they are approximately coordinate. As a series point the semicolon is often alternative with the comma. As a compounding point it competes with comma, colon, dash, and with period, question mark, and exclamation mark; for there is often difficulty in deciding whether a group should stand as a main clause or be given the rank of a sentence. The decision in such a case involves considerations of emphasis, clearness, and paragraph movement.

There is an obstinate popular misunderstanding in regard to the semicolon, held even by certain editors and textbook writers. In a current work entitled *Effective English,* by Messrs. P. P. Claxton and James McGinnis, one finds this summary statement (page 531): "There is a marked disposition to do away with the *semicolon* where it [the semicolon?] can be done with safety. Of course, there are times when this point is indispensable, but its use should be limited to cases where no other mark will do."

The passage is addressed to students; but the wording is such as to give the impression that the semicolon is rapidly passing into oblivion for writing in general, and should be avoided whenever another mark can possibly be stretched into service. If one is to accept this opinion, with others of the same kind in currency, the use of the semicolon is a piece of ostentatious formality.

The semicolon is in fact used by editorial writers in such periodicals as the *North American Review,* the New York *Nation* and *Evening Post,* the *New Republic,* the *Saturday Evening Post,* the New York *Sun,* the *New York Times,* even the *New York American.* It is also used by Colonel Watterson ("Marse Henry"), Mr. Irvin Cobb, Mr. Don C. Seitz, Mr. S. G. Blythe, Mr. J. L. Given, and Mr. William Allen White—newspaper men all six of them

—and by such writers as Miss Agnes Repplier, Mr. Meredith Nicholson, Mr. S. M. Crothers, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and Mr. Arnold Bennett. In fact there are few good writers, publishing books under their own names, who deny themselves the use of the semicolon. In a modern style with economical use of connectives, the semicolon is often an indispensable grouping point.

In the list of twenty periodicals and writers on page 249, newspapers and newspaper men making about half the list, the semicolons are outnumbered only by commas and periods. And in the table of editorial pointing on page 251, the semicolon is still third of all points in frequency. Its nearest competitor for third place is the dash.

Newspaper editorial practice is significant because such writing must be direct and readable. If the semicolon were stiff and obsolete, it would seldom be found in newspaper writing.

The popular prejudice against the semicolon has its grain of truth. The semicolon—like every other punctuation mark—has been overworked. It has also gained a bad name through its association with formal writing.

In this sentence, of a type still offered as good writing in some accounts of punctuation, the semicolons are felt as being stiff and formal:

> Philosophers assert, that Nature is unlimited in her operations; that she has inexhaustible treasures in reserve; that knowledge will always be progressive; and that all future generations will continue to make discoveries.

But the effect of the pointing is difficult to distinguish from the effect of the formal wording.

In business letters the semicolon is not often useful. In news stories it is often dispensed with, save for lists of names with addresses and the like, on the ground of edito-

rial preferences—not at all because the semicolon is useless for narrative, but because young men doing unsigned work are often expected to limit themselves narrowly in pointing as in style. Such restrictions are not likely to be imposed on responsible writers even in a newspaper office.

The semicolon has the following uses:

1. **As a compounding or main-clause point.** The compounding semicolon separates main clauses which would be too light if separated by the comma, and too distinct or formal if separated by colon, dash, period, question mark, or exclamation mark. What point should be used in a given case will depend only in part on the length of the clauses. Circumstances which may make the semicolon preferable to the comma are the absence of a connective, the use of a logical in place of a grammatical connective (pages 71ff.), length or complexity of parts, or a shift of subject between first and second clause. On the other hand, any of these circumstances may make a full stop preferable to the semicolon. Each case has to be decided in relation to the context. (See above, page 67.)

In the following passage the colon, semicolon, and comma exhibit statements according to their different rank:

> In general, there are two main matters to remember in connection with introductions: the opening portion of a composition puts the writer under certain obligations to his reader, and these have been already mentioned; again, the less formality about introductions, and about conclusions as well, the better for all concerned.—Percy H. Boynton, *Principles of Composition*, p. 28.

The compounding semicolon is used both with and without connectives, and with clauses either full or elliptical. The following sentences have the semicolon with grammatical connective.

So I do not insist on detailed accounts of how the boy passes his time in class or at play; for what are time and space and grammatical sequence to the child?—Simeon Strunsky, *Post-Impressions,* p. 126f.

"Kill the dog, he is a reviewer," cried the young Goethe; and in an age nearer our own William Morris expressed his contempt for those who earn a livelihood by writing their opinions of the works of others.—J. E. Spingarn, *Creative Criticism,* p. 3f.

The semicolon is the typical mark for the separation of clauses without connective or with a link word like *also, hence,* or *nevertheless.* Except with *yet,* the comma is seldom sufficient at a clause break with a logical connective. Whether the semicolon is preferable to the period is a question of clear and otherwise effective presentation. There is no cast-iron rule.

It should seem that a party whose theories are based on confidence in untrammeled human nature ought to present the aims and destinies of mankind in a fairer light than its adversary; yet the very contrary is the fact.—Paul Elmer More, *Aristocracy and Justice,* p. 169.

No such partiality in Dante; he paints what he hates as frankly as what he loves, and in all things he is complete and sincere.—George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets,* p. 134.

Strikes again in Austria; this time, significantly, in the north, where the unyielding hatred of the Czechs for the dynasty and the ruling nations has constantly hampered the Hapsburg Government since the beginning of the war.—*New York Times,* March 18, 1918.

In the last two examples the initial clauses are elliptical.

The compounding semicolon may be a balancing point, as in this example:

The cause which the flag stands for may be foolish and fleeting; the love may be calf-love, and last a week. But the patriot

thinks of the flag as eternal; the lover thinks of his love as something that cannot end. These moments are filled with eternity; these moments are joyful because they do not seem momentary. Once look at them as moments after Pater's manner, and they become as cold as Pater and his style. Man cannot love mortal things. He can only love immortal things for an instant. —G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics,* p. 108f.

In this passage balance is managed with the semicolon and also (in the last two sentences) with the period. In like manner, antithetical balance with *it is* and *it is not* may employ more than one type of punctuation.

I do not, therefore, say that the word "progress" is unmeaning; I say it is unmeaning without the previous definition of a moral doctrine, and that it can only be applied to groups of persons who hold that doctrine in common.—G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics,* p. 37.

I am not scolding her for this, I am merely mentioning it.—William Lyon Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel,* p. 296.

Antithesis and balance may exist between phrases, sentences, even larger groups. The sentences above illustrate only two of the possible styles.

The compounding semicolon can be anticipatory like the colon, though lighter. The semicolon is the mark most often used when a second clause answers a promise made or implied in the first clause.

In the last few years of his life he received a higher honor than a degree from any university however venerable; he received the highest honor within the gift of the Republic.—Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature,* p. 25.

2. **As a series point.** The semicolon is often used in lists of names with addresses or titles, names with figures,

and other lists where commas would be insufficient to separate the groups clearly or with sufficient emphasis.

See volume II, chapters 3 and 4; volume III, chapter 7, sections 1 and 2.

Yeas, 2; nays, 3. (Alternative style: Yeas 2, nays 3.)

The works cited are *The Writer's Desk Book,* by William Dana Orcutt; *Correct Composition,* by Theodore L. De Vinne; the *Manual of Style,* by the Staff of the University of Chicago Press; and the *Style Book of Typographical Practice,* by Douglas C. McMurtrie.

When the parts are light and simple enough to be clearly grouped by commas, commas are usually preferable.

Clauses or other groups in common dependence may be separated by semicolons or commas, the choice of points depending on the complexity and weight of the parts.

He [the writer on the "laws" of punctuation] must begin by admitting that no two masters of the art would punctuate the same page in the same way; that usage varies with every printing-office and with every proofreader; that as regards the author, too, his punctuation is largely determined by his style, or, in other words, is personal and individual—"singular, and to the humor of his irregular self."—Wendell Phillips Garrison, "A Dissolving View of Punctuation," *Atlantic Monthly,* August, 1906.

3. **As a mark of apposition.** Though not customarily a mark of apposition, the semicolon is sometimes the most convenient point, especially when the appositive group is in series or is felt as an elliptical main clause.

When the war is over there will be great numbers of men whose lives have been hopelessly jolted, who have to find new occupations; men qualified and probably only too willing to take positions of technical instruction and military training under such a scheme.—John Galsworthy, *A Sheaf,* p. 348.

I mean the idea that there is some sort of dignity in drawing the sword upon a man who has not got a sword; a waiter, or a shop assistant, or even a schoolboy.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny*, p. 37f.

In the following sentences the appositive relation blends with either series or compounding.

For any kind of pleasure a totally different spirit is required; a certain shyness, a certain indeterminate hope, a certain boyish expectation.—G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*, p. 109.

We can *do* nothing now, perhaps, save prosecute the fight to its appointed end; but if we are nôt to turn out fraudulent after the event, it is already time to feel ahead; to accustom our minds to the thought of the future efforts, imperial and social, needful to meet future dangers, and to fulfil the trusts we shall have taken up.—John Galsworthy, *A Sheaf*, p. 332.

Of the paragraph semicolon, which is practically obsolete in good printing, enough has been said in Chapter IV (page 54). Where matter capable of standing as a single paragraph is divided into paragraphs by way of tabulation, the usual terminal mark is the period.

For the traditional use of the semicolon before *namely* and similar expressions, see pages 98ff.

The Semicolon with Other Marks

The semicolon may occur with ellipsis or suspension periods, with the second of a pair of curves or brackets, rarely with the dash, of course often with quote marks. For the order of semicolon with curves, see page 238 below. With ellipsis periods, the semicolon precedes or follows, according to the position which the omitted words would fill if present. Suspension periods may either precede or follow the semicolon.

The combination of semicolon with dash may be regarded as a strengthened form of the semicolon. It is no longer common.

VI. The Comma

The comma is the least specialized of all points and therefore the most elusive. Generally speaking, it is the lightest mark in cases of (1) compounding, (2) series, with or without suspension, (3) preliminary, parenthetical, and afterthought matter, and modifiers, (4) the interruption or resumption of quotations, and (5) suspension. The comma is also used for what is reputed to be ellipsis. In its various uses the comma competes with the sentence points, the colon, the semicolon, the dash, and curves. In a particular case there may be no reasonable doubt as to the choice; but a given form and length of words may admit of a choice which can be made only in the light of such considerations as the importance of the group in the paragraph.

Unlike the period, question mark, exclamation point, colon, semicolon, dash, curves, and brackets, the comma has no clear special quality save for its comparative lightness. It is not a terminal point like the period, or a specialized coordinating mark like the semicolon, or an anticipatory point like the colon. Even the dash, which is nearest the comma in variety of uses, has a characteristic quality, and all the points except the dash have a much more limited number of uses. The comma may be used singly or in pairs; it may be either coordinating or subordinating; it may set off matter either parenthetical or structurally essential; it may serve merely to reinforce the dash; it may bound a group for emphasis or clearness where the syntactical relation is very close. Being used for many purposes and several times oftener than any other point save the period, the comma has no special and constant flavor.

An interesting suggestion regarding the effect of the comma is made by Miss Constance M. Rourke in an article listed on page 16 above. "The comma, called the half-point or semi-circular mark by Aldus, with its tiny hook or curve leftward, creates a suspension, an effect of incompleteness, as surely as the period is suggestive of conclusion. The comma emphasizes but at the same time subordinates; by its office parts of the whole statement come out distinctive, yet each is kept relative to the larger purpose." "A word or phrase cannot be 'set off,' as the rhetorics say, by commas; the mark from its form simply fails to affect the expression by which it is followed."

First, is it true that the comma regularly subordinates? As a parenthetical point it does, as a compounding or series mark it does not. In *earth, air, and sea,* the commas show that the nouns are in series. In the sentence *I came, I saw, I conquered,* the commas are as truly coordinating as if they were semicolons.

Again, is it true that the comma cannot "set off" a word or phrase? When commas group a parenthesis like *however* or *on the other hand,* do they not set it off?

But the main question is whether it is true that by virtue of its form the comma "simply fails to affect the expression by which it is followed." In all probability the significance of the form, "with its tiny hook or curve leftward," has not occurred to a fourth of those who use the comma with intelligence. The effect of the comma will depend on much more than the shape of the point.

Like most other marks, the comma is a suspension point which influences both preceding and following matter. Its effect may be seen in these examples:

Napoleon had therefore to face now, not only the cabinets of Europe and the regular armies that they directed, but a people

who were being organized to defend their country.—James Harvey Robinson, *Introduction to the History of Western Europe,* p. 623.

They therefore promised England a promise, on condition that she broke a promise, and on the implied condition that the new promise might be broken as easily as the old one. To the profound astonishment of Prussia, this reasonable offer was refused! —G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny,* p. 25f.

The comma after *now* in the example from Mr. Robinson emphasizes the preceding words, but also emphasizes by suspension the words which follow. In the passage from Mr. Chesterton, the first comma adds emphasis to the group *on condition that she broke a promise.* The second comma, by breaking up the close series with *and,* makes both members of the series more emphatic. The comma in the second sentence of the same passage is a boundary which divides the sentence into two groups, giving both parts more emphasis by suspension.

The curve of the comma may have some influence in directing attention backward for an instant. What contributes more to this effect is the position of the comma, close to the preceding word and divided by white space from the word that follows.

The effect of the comma in respect to the distribution of emphasis depends in very slight degree on its shape as shape, in greater degree on its position and the following white space, but far more on its frequency, on the context, on the grammatical and rhetorical relations which the customary uses of the comma suggest. A comma dividing a sentence into two groups will make both parts more distinct; it cannot group one without at the same time grouping the other. As a grouping and suspension mark, the comma inevitably affects the words which follow it, even though its relation be primarily to those that precede.

The Most Frequent of the Points

In the twenty passages listed in Table B (page 249), commas are the most numerous of all the structural points, their total being 9801 as against 7852 periods and 2347 of all other structural points put together. In the twenty passages there are only four in which the commas are outnumbered. In the aggregate, commas represent 49 per cent of the structural points used, periods coming next with 39.26 per cent, semicolons third, and dashes fourth.

This frequency of the comma is an argument rather for careful than for liberal use. Light as the comma is in comparison with the other points, it can make writing awkward and formal, even when clear. The effect is observable in the following sentence from the preface to a book on punctuation:

> As a sentence may contain the four principal marks (comma, semicolon, colon, and period) and, in addition, one or more of the other marks, a writer courts failure if, in treating the difficult art of punctuation, he deals with the marks separately, beginning, as all writers, myself included, have hitherto done, with the comma, the most difficult mark to understand, and proceeding, one at a time, with the other marks.

The Uses of the Comma

The comma has the following uses, for most of which there are alternative points. The comma is with minor exceptions the lightest and most colorless mark for each of the uses named.

1. **As a compounding point** without connective, with connective, rarely with logical connective.

Without Connective

Where link words are absent, the most frequent points between successive statements are the period, the semicolon, and the comma. The use of the comma without clause connective is increasing.

Circumstances favoring the comma are brevity of parts, parallel structure, a lighter weight in the paragraph than the semicolon would indicate, climactic structure, swift paragraph movement. Since much depends on the momentum of the passage, no safe rule can be given in terms of sentence length or even structure. The comma without clause connective is too delicate an instrument to be used by rule.

The following passages are typical:

England alone remained outside the pale, England alone had not been brought to bend the knee to the great conqueror. Even she was breathing heavily, because the Continental System was inflicting terrible damage upon her. Factories were being forced to shut down, multitudes of laborers were being thrown out of work or were receiving starvation wages, riots and other evidences of unrest and even desperation seemed to indicate that even she must soon come to terms.—Charles Downer Hazen, *Modern European History,* p. 228f. [An entire paragraph.]

There were many more points of difference than of similarity between them. They spoke different languages. They belonged to different religions, the Dutch being Protestant, the Belgians Catholic. They differed in their economic life and principles. The Dutch were an agricultural and commercial people and inclined toward free trade, the Belgians were a manufacturing people and inclined toward protection.—*Ib.,* p. 281.

The last sentence of the second passage is sufficiently pointed with the comma in this context. Elsewhere it might be better with the semicolon.

In the following passage from page 265 of the book just cited, the clauses of the second sentence are bound together by modifiers in common:

Vaccination and gas illumination were forbidden for the simple reason that the French had introduced them. In Piedmont French plants in the Botanic Gardens of Turin were torn up, French furniture in the royal palace was destroyed in response to this vigorous and infantile emotion.

For compound sentences in obverse relation, with *is not* and *is*, the most frequent mark is the semicolon. But there are cases with the comma.

How can a boy like such writing as that, pompous, inhuman, erring against every feeling of nature? The boy does not like it, he disregards it.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 37.

In the following cases of what has been called veiled subordination the coordinate relation is only apparent:

The truth is, were everything known about good usage with the positiveness with which assertions about it are made, the constant controversies which arise in regard to it would be a simple impossibility.—Thomas R. Lounsbury, *The Standard of Usage in English,* p. 96.

He cannot come until Tuesday, he tells me.

The compounding comma without connective requires careful management. If not supported by structure and paragraph movement, it is likely to seem careless or illiterate.

With Grammatical Connective

Where a grammatical connective is used—the connectives of this class being *and, but, for, or, nor*—the alternatives are comma, semicolon, colon, dash, comma with dash, or no

point at all. And of course there is always the option of making a sentence break. It is sometimes taught in schools that a sentence may not begin with a grammatical connective; but ten minutes' examination of almost any modern magazine will make it clear that sentences, even paragraphs, may begin with any of the five connectives. For the general subject of main-clause pointing, see pages 67ff.

Two-clause sentences with a grammatical connective may take the comma under widely varying conditions of length and complexity.

A small German boy perched on the low branch of a tree fell off and broke his arm on somebody's head, and it took the driver of an ambulance exactly thirty-two minutes to work his vehicle three-quarters of a city block to the spot where the boy had fallen. —Julian Ralph, as quoted in the New York *Sun*, May 9, 1918.

In this sentence the compounding comma happens to be the only interior point; but there are very numerous cases in which the comma is sufficient even with other commas in one or both of the clauses.

They consult each other, we know, but it always appears that they do their consulting only over some immediate question of the moment, as when France submitted to England Kaiser Karl's letter to Sixtus.—*New York Times*, June 8, 1918.

In a series of three or more clauses with a grammatical connective between the last two members but none between the others, it is customary to use a point before the conjunction.

Parties still existed, different war policies were advocated, but partisanship in war matters was abandoned.—The *Outlook*, April 10, 1918.

Carelessness apart, the style with no conjunction (*He agrees, I agree but nobody else agrees*) is uncommon even

in newspapers. The no-comma rule is often applied to predicates in series, seldom to full clauses with a subject and a verb for each part.

With Logical Connective

The connectives not included in the "grammatical" list (the grammatical connectives being *and, but, for, or, nor*) ordinarily take a semicolon or other point superior to the comma. The one exception often made in careful writing is in the case of *yet*.

Spencer was rightly chary of random compliments, yet he declared that he should value Mill's agreement more than that of any other thinker.—John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies,* vol. IV, p. 149.

The comma with any logical connective except *yet* is unsafe, though sometimes used with *so* by good writers. With *nevertheless, hence, therefore, moreover,* the points most often used are semicolons and periods.

Subordinate Clauses of Main-Clause Rank

A clause technically subordinate may be virtually a main clause. This is notably true of relative clauses (with relative adverb or pronoun) at the end of the sentence.

And in our modern practice a stop is often omissible at the end of a line because of the break, whereas it would be essential to clearness if the final word of one line and the first of the succeeding stood close together.—Wendell Phillips Garrison, "A Dissolving View of Punctuation," *Atlantic Monthly,* August, 1906.

2. **As a series point,** separating modifiers of the same noun, subjects of the same verb, or verbs belonging to the same

subject. The groups may vary from single words to long subordinate clauses. (Sentences and main clauses may be said to be in series, but such cases are best included under sentence and main-clause pointing.) Repetition may be a kind of series, though shading into apposition. Series may be suspended, with or without commas, as when the antithetical correlatives *not* and *but* are employed.

The appearance without the reality of series exists in such expressions as *big British transport. Big* and *British* are not rhetorically coordinate, the first adjective being a modifier of the noun group *British transport.* But where one writes *the humbugging, treacherous talk about no annexations,* the adjectives are coordinate members of a series properly pointed with the comma.

Commas may be required between members of a series for clearness, especially when the relations are not made clear throughout by conjunctions. They may be used for emphasis even with conjunctions present. It is impossible to frame rigid and at the same time safe rules.

It is not very unusual to find open series without conjunction. *A pure cold halo about him, a fine fat specimen, the thin gray line*—these are cases of series which commas would not help.

With conjunction present, there can be no fixed rule. The emphasis properly given to a series or any part of it will depend on its importance in the paragraph—a matter for determination by cases.

The following examples are typical cases of comma pointing between members of series:

The truth of the matter, as Mr. Chesterton would say, is, first, that writing, along with speaking, eating, sleeping, putting on clothes, and coming out of the rain, is one of the great universal acts of modern life.—William Tenney Brewster, *Writing English Prose,* p. 7.

It is, in our view, the province of the Government to see to it that businesses are conducted honestly, and in a way compatible with good morals and the public welfare.—George Harvey, in the *North American Review,* January, 1918.

The comma before the first *and* in the last example makes the members of the series more distinct.

In the case of triads and longer series with a conjunction between the last two members but not between the others, the customary textbook rule is to use the comma before the conjunction, according to this style: *The Central Powers include Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey.* But the ordinary though not unanimous practice in newspapers is to omit the last comma, a practice followed also by some magazines and many books. The following sentence uses what may be called the newspaper style.

But it is with equal earnestness to be hoped that both Government and people will regard these extraordinary measures as war measures, which ought to lapse with the war and to be replaced with a private control which will be just as honest, just as economical and just as efficient as that of the Government.—*North American Review,* January, 1918.

Though the style with comma before the conjunction has the weight of textbook authority and of careful usage, the weight of majority practice—of good, bad, and indifferent work which gets into print—is apparently tending toward the no-comma style.

The style with the full equipment of commas will give clear grouping, with the risk of awkward movement or misplaced emphasis. The newspaper style is not so safe in respect to clearness, and if carelessly handled is as clumsy in its way as the use of the comma may be in another way.

We have been requested to ask our passengers to throw newspapers, wrappers from chewing gum and candy and other refuse into the receptacles on Station platforms.—Bulletin in a New York subway train.

The effect is a coordination of *candy* with *other refuse.*

In this sentence from Mr. L. A. Sherman's *Analytics of Literature* (p. ix), the no-comma style would be ruinous:

We may weigh, compare, and accept or reject, but must first have impressions or judgments of our own, or we shall be dealing with unknown quantities.

One thing is certain. In writing for a newspaper which uses the open style, as in *food, ships and guns,* the obvious thing is to avoid series structure with one conjunction whenever the open style would be awkward. Compositors who believe that a conjunction bars the comma believe it with all their hearts.

A convenient way to avoid the difficulty—and lighten style—is to manage series informally without conjunctions.

During all this period Metternich was the chief minister. His system, at war with human nature, at war with the modern spirit, rested upon a meddlesome police, upon elaborate espionage, upon a vigilant censorship of ideas. Censorship was applied to theaters, newspapers, books. The frontiers were guarded that foreign books of a liberal character might not slip in to corrupt. Political science and history practically disappeared as serious studies. Spies were everywhere, in government offices, in places of amusement, in educational institutions. Particularly did this government fear the universities, because it feared ideas.—Charles Downer Hazen, *Modern European History,* p. 258.

If series conjunctions were used in the second and third sentences of the passage, the style would be made heavy but no clearer.

Comma at End of Series

The end of a series may be pointed or open, according to requirements of clearness. The expression *dull, aching, loneliness*—quoted from Mr. Harold Bell Wright, who uses this pointing repeatedly—looks like a series of three members, instead of what it is, a noun modified by a series of two adjectives. The omission of the comma would make the expression conform to the style customary for so short a series, and make the meaning clear. Possibly the comma is meant as a rhythmical point after the Elizabethan manner.

In short groups like *careful, deliberate study,* usage is clearly in favor of omitting the series-end comma. On the other hand, consistency yields to utility whenever pointing is necessary to clearness.

Different in kind from the printed symbols which denote the word, phrase, and sentence, any point creates a momentary restraint of attention, a pause which may not be in the least perceptible, but in which the preceding meaning tends to repeat and enforce itself.—Constance M. Rourke, *The Rationale of Punctuation.*

Or can we read between the lines of the war news, diplomatic disputations, threats and accusations, political wranglings and stories of hardship and cruelty that now fill our papers, anything that still justifies a hope that these bitter years of world sorrow are the darkness before the dawn of a better day for mankind?—H. G. Wells, *What Is Coming?* (p. 9).

Suspended Series with Comma

The emphatic device of series suspension, sometimes useful but often injurious to good movement, is employed in the following sentences:

Besides, or rather contained within, a nation are many smaller crowds geographically defined.—Sir Martin Conway, *The Crowd in Peace and War,* p. 6.

Shaw is an isolated, not to say eccentric, figure, even for a Socialist.—Edwin E. Slosson, *Six Major Prophets,* p. 23.

The approach of the present anniversary has revived to a notable extent interest in Calvin's dominating, but perplexing, personality.—Ephraim Emerton, in the New York *Evening Post,* July 10, 1909.

The first sentence has what are called suspended particles. In the second there is suspension emphasizing the adjectives *isolated* and *eccentric,* with incidental suspension upon *figure.* In the third sentence the suspension has an injurious effect on the cadence.

With a series linked by the correlatives *not* and *but* there may or may not be pointing, the open style being more rapid and the comma style more emphatic.

If there is any ground whatever for just criticism of the Governor's message of night before last it is not that he has exceeded his power or prerogatives, but rather that he has risked exceeding the time limit of opportunity by delaying so long the warning and the intimation.—The New York *Sun* (editorial), March 20, 1918.

They must convince not an impartial jury but a jury packed against them.—From a New York newspaper.

Wording which permits series-suspension commas may often be better without them.

Elizabeth's first Parliament gave to the queen the power though not the title of supreme head of the English church.—James Harvey Robinson, *Introduction to the History of Western Europe,* p. 549.

3. **With modifying, preliminary, parenthetical, or afterthought matter,** including appositives. For the options in the pointing of such elements, see pages 85ff.

The comma is used singly or in pairs, according to the position of the group. Groups to be pointed (with commas or other marks) are in general those not required for structure or definition. Expressions of indeterminate character are pointed or left open according to requirements of distinctness and movement.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts. (Alternative style: Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts.)

John Fox, Jr. (Alternative: John Fox Jr.)

He [Lowell] began his career with some slight verses, sincere in thought and not unskilful, though technically stiff and hasty with the haste that betrays itself.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 189.

Being human, he longs to see the results of his labors.—S. M. Crothers, *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord,* p. 29.

The railroads, which had been vastly enlarged and enriched by the war, pushed everywhere now with marvelous rapidity; great industries, like the new oil industry, sprang into wealth and power.—Fred Lewis Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870,* p. 5.

Adverbial modifiers are treated like adjective elements, but are more likely to be of indeterminate character, pointed or open according to the writer's purpose.

An adverbial clause at the beginning of a sentence will usually but not always take the comma.

Now that the bulk of straight matter is set on machines, employers find it to their advantage to have copy revised by the proofreader before setting.—Frank S. Henry, *Printing for School and Shop,* p. 50.

An adverbial group following a conjunction at the beginning of sentence or clause may be open, or pointed at the end, or set off with two points.

With the shadow of its failure falling and Russia getting ready to advance, the Reichstag was instructed to pass bogus peace resolutions. But when Russia collapsed the resolutions were forgotten, and von Hindenburg was lifted to Valhalla.—New York *Globe* (editorial), March 16, 1918.

But if the host of American radicals whom Jefferson led and whose spirit he so truly interpreted were forgetful of the practical friendship of French Royalty in our hour of need, American conservatives, among whom Marshall was developing leadership, were also unmindful of the dark crimes against the people which, at an earlier period, had stained the Monarchy of France and gradually cast up the account that brought on the inevitable settlement of the Revolution.—A. J. Beveridge, *Life of John Marshall,* vol. II, p. 32.

The style with two commas (*Yet, under present conditions, I am uncertain*) converts the modifier into a parenthesis, and strongly affects the movement.

Commas are often used to set off such preliminary expressions as vocatives, absolute phrases, exclamations, transitional phrases.

Why, that is the same one.

Yes, I agree with you.

Oh, I see.

On the other hand, Hébert the leader of the commune felt that the revolution was not yet complete.—James Harvey Robinson, *Introduction to the History of Western Europe,* p. 589.

Parenthetical matter enclosed by commas may range from a word to a clause. For the alternative points see pages 106ff.

In the same year, 1789, that the American Republic began its career under the forms of a National Government, the curtain rose in France on that tremendous drama which will forever engage the interest of mankind.—A. J. Beveridge, *Life of John Marshall,* vol. II, p. 2.

The commas enclosing the date 1789 make an ordinary appositive rather than a light parenthesis. In this use, though hardly any other, commas are more obtrusive than curves. For parenthetical clauses like *it is said* or *I have no doubt*, commas are much lighter than curves, the curves being theoretically light but actually formal or self-conscious.

These things, alas, were an allegory.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Crimes of England*, p. 108.

He blushed like a maid, bless his tender heart, and in his sweet confusion he knew that I knew it.—Vachel Lindsay, *A Handy Guide for Beggars*, p. 86.

Perhaps, indeed, we did not have a democracy at all during the early decades of the nineteenth century.—William Allen White, *The Old Order Changeth*, p. 1.

Matter which would be called preliminary or parenthetical if at the beginning or embedded within the sentence may be called "afterthought" matter whenever placed at the end. Comma-pointed afterthoughts may be clause tags, like *it is said*, or modifiers. Afterthoughts are emphatic by both position and suspension.

In the following sentences the afterthought elements are technically appositives or modifiers.

But Hawthorne, fortunately, was a mildly irreverent man, charmed by the colours of things, and somewhat sceptical of the intense beliefs of his contemporaries.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature*, p. 84.

Mrs. Ballinger is one of the ladies who pursue Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet alone.—Edith Wharton, *Xingu*, p. 3.

4. **Before a quotation, or to mark the interruption or resumption of a quotation.** For the omission of points and

the use of points other than the comma, see pages 152ff., 154f.

The following are typical cases with the comma:

It asked eagerly of every foreign visitor, "And what do you think of us?" and when the answer, as in the case of Moore or Marryat or Dickens, was critical, it flew into a passion.—Fred Lewis Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870,* p. 8.

"Get hold of a dramatic American theme," he counsels Taylor, "merely for policy's sake. The people want Neo-Americanism; we must adopt their system and elevate it."—*Ib.,* p. 16.

Quoted phrases in series may be treated like other members of series. In the following case commas are the natural points to use:

His fondness for the big or unusual words and phrases "empyrean," "nadir," "capriccio," "cui bono," "coup d'état," shows that he has been to a feast of languages and stolen the scraps.—Cited in Theodore L. De Vinne's *Correct Composition,* p. 215.

Before a quotation the comma is lighter and less formal than the colon. If the quotation is short and not formally heralded, the comma is usually appropriate.

5. **For special grouping.** The comma is sometimes used for suspension or clearness even when the structural relation is close, as between subject and verb or between verb and complement.

The end of a long series subject is often marked by the comma without awkwardness; but otherwise a comma between subject and verb is likely to be felt as a piece of formality. If a comma is needed for clearness, the fact may suggest need of revision.

That the undertone of quiet confidence in the outcome of the European battle—which was so notable an incident of last week's

financial markets—should have been in evidence again to-day, was not surprising, in the light of the news since Saturday.—New York *Evening Post,* April 1, 1918.

The first comma is necessary only because the subject is overelaborate.

According to a textbook rule still current the infinitive-phrase subject of the following sentence should end with a comma. As a matter of fact a comma would be worse than useless.

To indulge in elaborate and pompous rhetorical flourishes in the last paragraphs is likely to be as painful to the reader as it is for a hostess to have a caller stand in the doorway on a cold winter day for several minutes after she should have taken her leave.—Percy H. Boynton, *Principles of Composition,* p. 45.

In the following sentence the comma separates the verb from its preceding object:

The harmony which the old religion had failed to establish in space and in Nature, the new sought to establish in history and in time.—George Santayana, *Poetry and Religion,* p. 74.

The "Ellipsis" Comma

For the sake of rapidity, modern writing omits many verbs which an elder generation would have held useful.

His views may have been one-sided, his protest against convention exaggerated, his emphasizing of the trivial itself a mannerism.—T. S. Omond, *The Romantic Triumph,* p. 26.

The two Balkan wars cost heavily in human life and in treasure. Turkey and Bulgaria each lost over 150,000 in killed and wounded, Servia over 70,000, Greece nearly as many, little Montenegro over 10,000.—Charles Downer Hazen, *Modern European History,* p. 606.

The tradition that ellipsis of the verb requires to be acknowledged with a comma is fundamentally wrong. In the sentences from Mr. Omond and Mr. Hazen, commas would be not merely unnecessary but ruinous. The old rule is properly associated with sentences of the following kind, the specimen being borrowed from a manual of punctuation:

The benevolent man is esteemed; the pernicious, condemned.

In many cases of what is called ellipsis of the verb, the comma is unnecessary. In most cases where useful, the comma is merely a grouping signal.

For the sake of clearness, commas may be used between dates or names. In *May 7, 1915,* or *Louisville, Kentucky,* or *150,000,* and in such a sentence as *In chapter 3, 30 errors have been detected,* the commas are used for clear grouping, not to acknowledge ellipsis. The date style *on the 10th December 1623,* not uncommon in British books, is clear without a comma.

In this sentence a comma is needed for clearness, because without it the adverb *before* might be mistaken for a conjunction:

But not long before, the flogging of women by an Austrian general led to that officer being thrashed in the streets of London by Barclay and Perkins' draymen.—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny,* p. 18.

In the sentence following, the comma is a suspensive mark making *still* an emphatic preliminary:

Still, his contribution has been for the most part a negative one.—Barrett H. Clark, *The British and American Drama of To-day,* p. 77.

6. The comma is often used **to reinforce the dash,** the combination being used singly or in pairs. An account of this combination is given on page 233 below.

7. **Miscellaneous and mechanical uses.** Before the abbreviation *etc.* the comma is specified by some authorities as being always necessary. So general a rule is illogical, but has the weight of usage.

After the expressions *e. g., i. e., s. v.,* a comma is regularly used in some offices; but the open style has at least an equal weight of authority, besides being lighter and more logical. The matter following such an expression is ordinarily in restrictive apposition.

The use of the comma as a paragraph point, similar to the paragraph semicolon (see page 54), is very infrequent, as it should be. Where matter is put into outline form the usual division mark is the period.

The Comma with Other Points

The comma rarely combines with other points except curves, brackets, the dash, and quote marks. For its use with the dash see page 233 below; for comma with curves (the same rule holding for comma with brackets), see page 238.

The usual American rule for the comma with an end-quote is to let the comma precede under all circumstances; but there are frequent deviations from this rule either intended or inadvertent. Where the comma occurs with a single quote, some of the best printers prefer to arrange the points according to the meaning. Others prefer the fixed order, with the comma first. (See pages 156, 159f.)

VII. The Dash

The name *dash* when used without qualification means in this chapter, as above, the ordinary em dash. In addition

to the em dash printers have the en dash and dashes of two-em and three-em length. Long dashes are rare in text matter save for ellipsis or broken sentences.

The dash has been described as the interruption, the mark of abruptness, the sob, the stammer, the mark of unutterable emotion, and the mark of ignorance. The last name records the fact that many mistake the dash for a general-utility mark to be requisitioned on all occasions. In respect to frequency the dash is one of the first four points in ordinary text matter, the other three being comma, period, semicolon. Dean Alford's opinion that the dash "should never be admitted if it can be helped" is extreme, like some of his other opinions.

The dash is an abrupt or emphatic mark, characteristically employed to mark interruption, suspension, or sudden turn. It is nearer akin to the comma than to any other of the marks, being used singly or in pairs, between members either coordinate or of different rank, and with a variety of constructions. But unlike the comma it is a strong point, with a characteristic flavor in spite of its versatility.

The dash, either singly or in pairs, and often reinforced with the comma, is employed for the following uses:

1. **To group words for special emphasis, or to indicate hesitation, interruption, incompletion, suspension or release of suspension, shift of structure, or emphatic repetition.**

The dash as a mark of incompletion may be used as a sentence point, or as a means of paragraph suspension.

"My young friends," he says, "I hope and trust that my words may be the means of saving you from much of the heartache and sorrow of this world. When I was young—"—Meredith Nicholson, *The Provincial American and Other Papers*, p. 93.

Article 46 reads like a ghastly satire. It provides that in occu-

pied territories, such as Germany and her allies now hold in Belgium, France, Poland, Serbia, Rumania, and Montenegro—

Family honor and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.

The preceding example is from the *New York Times* of February 11, 1918, the suspended paragraph being a quotation in reduced type.

In the following examples the dash is a mark of suspension or shift within the limits of the sentence:

After these—that brace of reprobates, Byron and Shelley.—A. E. Hancock, *John Keats,* p. 5.

The patriarchs from Adam down, the kings and prophets, the creation, Eden, the deluge, the deliverance out of Egypt, the thunders and the law of Sinai, the temple, the exile—all this and much more that fills the Bible was a rich fund, a familiar tradition living in the Church, on which Dante could draw, as he drew at the same time from the parallel classic tradition which he also inherited.—George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets,* p. 83.

The dash in the last sentence, technically an appositive point, is used to effect a shift of structure. In the following sentence the dash marks a case of repetition with addition:

Why should not the workers have the privilege for their sons that belongs by mere good fortune to the wealthier classes—the privilege of a training that will give them greater health, greater knowledge and technical skill, better habits, more self-respect, and the power as well as the inclination to defend their country if need be?—John Galsworthy, *A Sheaf,* p. 347.

2. **To mark the ellipsis of a word or less than a word,** for concealment or delicacy either actual or formal. **The**

concealment dash is used in the form *Mr. M——* for *Mr. Morley.* The euphemistic dash, presumably without any genuine attempt at concealment, is used in *d—n* or in *What the d—l do you mean?* The length of the ellipsis dash is governed by office rules.

3. **As a compounding point,** usually with the effect of suggesting an appositive relation between clauses or else an unexpected turn of thought.

Notified that the Kaiser is to say something pathetic and historic at 1:30 P. M. on a hillock near Queant, to the west of Cambrai, Mr. Rosner repairs thither. He finds the Kaiser in the correct attitude, looking mournfully down upon the battlefield, his staff disposed properly, some at L., some at R., some at L. U. E., one alongside him—necessarily, for the Kaiser cannot utter the historic and pathetic saying unless he has somebody to utter it to.—*New York Times* (editorial), May 23, 1918.

Before the clause link in the second sentence the point is a comma; but the actual clause break is made by the dash. In the following sentence the second clause is in apposition with the first.

The answer came to me in a flash as I turned away from Fuller Place,—Clark's field no longer existed.—Robert Herrick, *Clark's Field,* p. 6.

4. **As a series point,** usually with the effect of emphasizing the members sharply. The series dash commonly suggests an appositive or parenthetical relation.

A young woman of social prominence printed some verses in an Indianapolis newspaper, and one of her acquaintances, when asked for his opinion of them, said they were creditable and ought to be set to music—and played as an instrumental piece!—Meredith Nicholson, *The Provincial American and Other Papers,* p. 81.

In the sentence cited from Mr. Nicholson the dash marks an unexpected turn in the series, with the effect of emphasizing the succeeding clause. In the following sentence, from an editorial in the *North American Review* (February, 1918), the dashes enclose a group in suspended or parenthetical series:

When one government succeeds another, by revolution or otherwise, it assumes all the powers of its predecessor, and it should—in our antiquated view, it must—equally incur all its predecessor's responsibilities, diplomatic and pecuniary.

At the end of a series in a periodic sentence the dash often serves to mark the turning point in the sentence, just before the release of suspension. Examples of this use, which is a mixture of appositional with series and suspension pointing, are given on pages 226 and 230. To group a series of modifiers the dash is often the most convenient point. Examples are given in the following division of this section.

5. **To set off preliminary, parenthetical, or afterthought matter, and also modifiers,** including appositives. For the sum of these uses the principal other mark is the comma; but for parenthetical matter curves are often the nearest alternatives, and in cases of emphatic apposition there is often difficulty in deciding between dash and colon.

For preliminary matter:

Note to all the editors—"What did you play up that dash story for? . . ."—Don C. Seitz, *Training for the Newspaper Trade,* p. 57f. [The word *dash* is a euphemism for which an ellipsis dash or the word *blank* or *blanked* might be substituted.]

After salutations of letters "run in" (in the same paragraph with following matter) a dash or comma with dash

may be used. A much more frequent style is to give the salutation a line to itself and point it with colon.

Sometimes at the beginning of numbered sections or after the names of dramatis personae dashes are used in place of the more frequent periods:

First—That the packers maintained stock yards in different cities in an effort to hold down prices paid producers. . . .

Second—That there was an agreement in effect among the packers prorating the amount of live stock any one of them could buy in any market.

. . . . . .

Young wife (distractedly)—"Oh, John, John! that fat cook you sent up from the agency——" Husband—"Yes, what's the matter?" "She's got wedged in the kitchenette, and I can't get her out!"—New York *Evening Post,* with credit to *Judge.*

The most frequent point for preliminary matter is the comma.

For very brief incidental parentheses curves are the lightest points; for light parentheses not so incidental as page references or the like, the most usual marks are commas. Dashes are seldom used by careful writers for light parenthetical matter, because emphatic points. They are useful rather for parenthetical clauses which would be too light with commas and too formal with curves, for emphatic parenthetical phrases, and for parenthetical groups containing commas.

Again, if you hear a man talking overmuch of brotherly love and that sort of thing—I do not mean the hypocrite, but the sincere humanitarian whom you and I have met and had dealings with and could name—if you hear such a man talking overmuch of serving his fellows, you are pretty sure that here is a man who will be slippery or dishonourable in his personal transactions.—Paul Elmer More, *Aristocracy and Justice,* p. 143f.

But we have a sure monitor of the will to act righteously in

the present feeling of happiness or misery, and we have a hope—a divine illusion it may be, for it has never among men been verified by experience—that in some way and at some time happiness and pleasure shall be completely reconciled by Nature, who, by mysterious deviations beyond our mortal ken, is herself also a servant of the law of justice.—*Ib.*, p. 115f.

In each of these there is a comma or pair of commas within the group enclosed by the dashes. In the following sentence, from page 5 of the same book, the dashes enclose a parenthetical appositive group:

Plato wrestled with it when he undertook to outline the ideal republic, and many of his pages on the range of government through its five forms—aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny—sound as if he had been reading yesterday's newspapers of London and New York.

This is one of the most common uses of the dash.

The afterthought dash is employed to set off appositives, adjective or adverb groups, or other matter, the dash and the position at the end of the sentence giving such afterthoughts a considerable degree of emphasis.

The opposition to the theater by the city was doubtless in part due to moral and religious grounds, but perhaps in larger part to direct social causes,—to the dangers that the theaters offered for rioting, fire, and the spread of the plague.—A. H. Thorndike, *Shakespeare's Theater*, p. 35.

England and the allies had laid the Corsican ghost, restored monarchy in France, rekindled the aura that invests a king. History was free once more to pursue the even tenor of her way. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,—these would be recorded, in a footnote, as an aberration of the human brain.—A. E. Hancock, *John Keats*, p. 2.

In each of these examples the dash (with comma in each case, as it happens) is an appositive point, marking in the

second example a shift of structure with release of suspension. In the following passage the dash sets off an emphatic modifier:

A Dutch artist is said to have taken a cow grazing in a field as the "fixed point" in his landscape—with consequences to his perspective which may be imagined. The writer on the "laws" of punctuation is in much the same predicament.—Wendell Phillips Garrison, "A Dissolving View of Punctuation," *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1906.

6. The dash has **semi-mechanical uses** as a repetition sign or ditto mark in catalogue work, bibliographies and the like, and between an extract and the name of the author or journal to which credit is given.

7. The **en dash** in typographical work—the hyphen character being the nearest equivalent in typewriting—is used between dates or numbers, between names which are not single orthographic units, sometimes in compound words set in capitals.

Pages 35–55.
April 20–26, 1918.
The New York–Philadelphia trains. [But *Boston-Hartford express* with hyphen.]

The Dash with Other Points

Certain publishers of high standing use the combination of colon with dash before quotations separately paragraphed, and many publications make considerable use of comma with dash. On the other hand there is a strong and apparently growing weight of opinion against most combinations with the dash in text matter. The *Style Book of Typographical Practice* compiled by Mr. Douglas C.

McMurtrie and used by the Columbia University Printing Office says categorically: "The dash . . . cannot properly be combined with other punctuation." Mr. F. Horace Teall, in his *Punctuation, with Chapters on Hyphenization,* is equally emphatic: "As a matter of fact, the dash [with colon] adds nothing but an unsightly mark on the page." "No writer . . . has stated a sufficient reason for using a dash and any other point together." The *Manual of Style* of the University of Chicago Press (fifth edition, page 68) says, "A dash should ordinarily not be used with any other point, except a period." These opinions are recent, except Mr. Teall's, and of high authority. That of Mr. Teall, cited from a work with copyright date 1897, is evidence that the objection to the reinforced or reinforcing dash is no novelty.

The combination of period and dash is used for the most part (1) between a side-head and the first word following, (2) between an extract and the name of the work or author, (3) to mark a break within a paragraph or to indicate a paragraph where space must be saved. After side-heads the period is often used without the dash. The mid-paragraph dash, once common, is infrequent now in ordinary matter.

The dash is rarely used before or after a terminal question or exclamation mark. But either may occur at the end of a parenthetical group between dashes.

Yet in the history of France alluded to above, the description of the feudal system scarcely extends beyond dungeons,—"Oh how damp, dark, and cold!"—knee clamps and thumbscrews.—James Harvey Robinson, *The New History,* p. 11.

The dash sometimes occurs after but seldom before the second of a pair of curves, not often after a semicolon, more frequently after colon or comma.

The combination colon with dash is sometimes used before an appositive or quotation which follows in the same paragraph, but much oftener before a paragraph break, as after the *Dear Sir* of a letter or after words introducing an extract. The utility of the dash is indiscernible.

For the union of comma with dash there have been rules admirable for their ingenuity if for nothing else. The fact is that the dash can do any work done by the comma and dash together, except only that the combination seems more emphatic. A series parenthesis containing commas may be enclosed between dashes or between commas with dashes; an emphatic afterthought with or without commas can be suspended by either the single or the reinforced dash; compounding can be managed with the dash alone or with the dash reinforced by preceding comma. There may be arbitrary distinctions between the dash and the reinforced dash, but no such distinction is generally valid or indeed clearly understood, except for a supposed difference in strength.

Very rarely a parenthesis has a dash at the beginning and a comma with dash at the end. This arrangement is likely to seem eccentric, whatever the apparent logical justification. As the dash is not limited to parenthetical work as curves are limited, the second dash of a pair may do two kinds of work at the same time.

The dash may either precede or follow an end quote, according to circumstances.

"Welcome to Mexico!" he said.

"Could you tell me——" I continued.

"Welcome to our sunny Mexico!" he repeated—"our beautiful, glorious Mexico. Her heart throbs at the sight of you."—Stephen Leacock, *Further Foolishness*, p. 67f.

VIII. Curves

The name parenthesis happens to be the most convenient term for an intermediate expression which might be omitted without dislocation of structure. For this reason and because the most frequent parenthetical marks are commas, the term *parentheses* for a particular pair of marks may be misleading. The name *curves,* already current, has therefore been used in this book.

In the plainest kinds of prose, curves are used mainly for two purposes: (1) to enclose numbers or letters, as in this sentence, enumerating the members of a series, (2) to enclose incidental explanatory matter, page references, or descriptive matter which other points would emphasize too much or not distinguish clearly from matter in the immediate context. But in the more elaborate or literary types of prose, curves have a less restricted use. They may enclose sentences, even passages of some length; within the sentence they may set off parentheses of considerable length and complexity.

Excessive use of curves may give an air of self-consciousness, of formality, of quaintness where quaintness is vanity. Curves are infrequent in good untechnical writing.

When curves enclose explanation made necessary by poor writing, they give the impression of laziness.

John said that he (James) expected to come in the early afternoon.

Curves are employed, often as alternative to commas or dashes, for the following uses:

1. **To enclose matter which is to be taken as actually or in form parenthetical.**

The following sentences illustrate the lighter uses of curves for incidental parentheses:

Seldom is a newspaper paragraph longer than twenty lines, or about 150 words; the conservative Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* sets a limit of 400 words.—C. G. Ross, *The Writing of News,* p. 184.

Harrison was defeated for governor by a farmer (1876), in a heated campaign, in which "Kid-Gloved Harrison" was held up to derision by the adherents of "Blue-Jeans Williams."—Meredith Nicholson, *The Provincial American and Other Papers,* p. 74f.

The second one, which has just appeared—"Face to Face with Kaiserism" (Doran: $2 net)—contains nothing on official affairs to make the reader sit up in startled amazement, as did the stories of the Kaiser's personal telegram to President Wilson, and his remark about no post-bellum nonsense from America.—New York *Evening Post,* April 17, 1918.

The following sentences illustrate the use of curves for matter less incidental:

With the exception of "Griffith Davenport" (which was very uneven in quality) these plays were accepted by the public; and, having accepted them, the public could not retreat into the past, nor could the playwright.—Walter Prichard Eaton, *The American Stage of To-day,* p. 10.

Men who go north and meet the woods Indian still unspoiled (I am thinking especially of one sympathetic and shrewd explorer) tell us that they find the living brother of Cooper's bronze hero, dignified, of high honor, stoical and eloquent.—John Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature,* p. 42.

The first contains a parenthetical subordinate clause, the second a parenthetical main clause.

Sometimes curves enclose a modifier which appears to be an integral part of the structure: "despite his (supposedly) low rank," "the (somewhat obscure) meaning of his words." This use of curves is infrequent but sometimes convenient.

The following sentence, from the article *Parenthesis* in

the Encyclopaedia Britannica (eleventh edition), illustrates the blending of series and parenthesis.

The grammatical term denoting the insertion (and so also the signs for such insertion) of a word, phrase or sentence between other words or in another sentence, without interfering with the construction, and serving a qualifying, explanatory or supplementary purpose.

Afterthoughts are sometimes enclosed in curves, but are more usually pointed with comma or dash. The contradiction between the emphatic position of such groups and the apparently light pointing may explain the infrequency of curves for terminal groups.

There has been evidence in several American papers that have reached me recently of a disposition to get ahead with Russia and cut out the Germans (and incidentally the British).—H. G. Wells, *What Is Coming?* (p. 236).

For the pointing of afterthoughts, see especially pages 114ff.

A parenthetical group may be set as a sentence in curves.

Put the period inside the quotation marks. (This is a rule without exception.)—Rule of the University of Chicago Press.

An extension of the parenthetical sentence is the paragraph, seldom a longer passage, in curves.

Credits are sometimes enclosed in curves instead of being set off with the dash.

"It can be only through desire and constant experiment that skill in writing is acquired." (William Tenney Brewster.)

2. Curves are often employed to enclose division letters or numerals, especially division numbers within a paragraph.

When you read a book there are only three things of which you may be conscious: (1) The significance of the words, which is inseparably bound up with the thought. (2) The look of the printed words on the page—I do not suppose that anybody reads any author for the visual beauty of the words on the page. (3) The sound of the words, either actually uttered or imagined by the brain to be uttered.—Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste,* p. 52.

A number at the beginning of a paragraph, belonging to the whole paragraph, is usually pointed with the period.

A single right-hand curve is sometimes used after a division number or letter, but rarely except in tabulated outlines.

3. Curves are **sometimes used to enclose editorial interpolations,** especially the commentary *sic,* which calls attention to a peculiarity or a slip in quoted matter. If the context clearly shows the parenthesis to be an interpolation, curves are not seriously objectionable. Otherwise the writer should use brackets or manage his comments otherwise than by interpolation.

Curves are infrequently used to enclose doubtful or alternative letters, as when one writes *the strai(gh)t and narrow way, the assessor(s)*—in the former case pointing out the proper spelling of the word, in the latter indicating doubt whether *assessor* should be written plural.

Curves with Other Points

The second curve follows a sentence point only when the whole sentence, or more than a sentence, is parenthetical. If the curves merely enclose a group at the end of a sentence, the terminal point follows the curve.

"Edsall, do you remember Clark's Field?" (For Edsall had once lived in Alton, though not in my part of the town.)—Robert Herrick, *Clark's Field,* p. 12.

The rule has been quoted from *The Writer's Desk Book* (page 13).

According to the usual American practice, comma, colon, and semicolon regularly follow the second curve.

As Mr. Pearsall Smith points out (*The English Language*, Chap. V), our standard writers were once innovators in language. —William Tenney Brewster, *Writing English Prose*, p. 155.

When I was a child my mother would not permit me to read novels on Sunday; and yet, some thirty years after that period, I received a letter from a woman who was very old, a bed-ridden invalid, and the widow of a Baptist minister (the three qualifications are not arranged as a climax); she wrote, "Thank the Lord for novels!"—William Lyon Phelps, *The Advance of the English Novel*, p. 10.

Like the comma or semicolon, the dash may follow a second curve.

Why, I've seen him send out letters (I wouldn't say this to any one outside, of course, and I wouldn't like to have it repeated)—letters with, actually, mistakes in English. Think of it, in English! Ask his stenographer.—Stephen Leacock, *Further Foolishness*, p. 186.

A quote mark may either precede or follow a second curve, according to circumstances:

The volume cited ("Aristocracy and Justice") is by Mr. Paul Elmer More.

The sentence is in this form: "There was much talk of a service in Westminster Abbey, the Prime Minister approved of it and the Dean was quite willing there should be one, providing the Chapter consented (which was a matter of course)."

Matter within curves may contain series or other pointing; but with the exception of quote marks, question marks, or interrogation points, there is seldom a punctuation mark

before the second of a pair of curves. And most parentheses ending with exclamation or question marks are enclosed between dashes.

IX. Brackets

In ordinary text brackets are almost invariably editorial points, enclosing matter interpolated in an extract by way of substitution, explanation, or comment. The use of brackets to enclose secondary parenthesis within curves is rare except in technical matter. Few typewriters are equipped with bracket characters.

1. The bracketed interpolation may be a word, a question or exclamation mark, or a passage of some length.

"My son," cries the Savoyard curate, "keep your soul always in a state to desire that there may be a God, and you will never doubt it [this sounds much like the German Kant]. . . ."—P. M. Buck, Jr., *Social Forces in Modern Literature,* p. 82.

Brackets for substitution are likely to be awkward. If one quotes a rule in the form "The comma is required before *not,* when introducing an antithetical clause," with a substitution for the misleading "required," the effect is awkward:

"The comma is [permissible] before *not,* when introducing an antithetical clause."

As the substituted word is structurally essential, the pointing is clumsy.

The parenthetical commentary *sic,* set either roman or italic, is sometimes enclosed in curves, sometimes in brackets. Brackets are the logical marks for the purpose. A question or exclamation mark interpolated in an extract by way of query or expression of surprise is properly bracketed.

2. In texts of uncertain authority, brackets are used to enclose letters, words, even punctuation marks, which the editor regards as interpolated or conjectural.

3. Brackets may enclose a parenthesis within parenthetical matter. This arrangement is uncommon except in legal or other technical matter.

Bowman Act (22 Stat. L., ch. 4, § [or sec.] 4, p. 50).—Court of Claims style, Government Printing Office.

Within curves in ordinary text matter, a secondary parenthesis may be set off with commas.

4. Brackets are rarely used to enclose division numbers belonging to a series set as a solid paragraph. For this purpose curves are much oftener used, as in the paragraph just below.

5. A single bracket may be used (1) to indicate a runover of a line set above or below the line to save space, (2) to set off a credit from an extract. These uses are rare or special.

Brackets used with other points follow as a rule the same order as curves.

CHAPTER IX

SOME TYPES OF PUNCTUATION

THE purpose of this chapter is to point out some facts about the frequency of punctuation marks in representative current books and periodicals.

The percentages given in the tables below are not offered as the result of exhaustive or even extensive investigation. They are intended merely to give definite information within the limits noted. But they are sufficient to throw light on certain resemblances or differences of style, and to show in a measure the frequency in which certain points are likely to be useful.

Deductions from these figures should be made with caution. The tone and movement of composition are affected not merely by the points here listed but also by paragraphing, capitals, italic, hyphens, even apostrophes. The weight and movement of style depend in large part also on the frequency of finite verbs, the frequency and kind of connectives, the frequency and kinds of relative clauses. A useful laboratory test of an individual's written style would involve much more than the counting of punctuation marks. Yet the mere proportion of terminal to other points may be sufficient to make clear the need of simplifying sentence structure. Or the fact that a writer uses ten dashes to ninety of all other structural points put together raises the presumption that his style should be either more careful or more temperate.

In all the estimates given, the following classes of points are omitted:

1. Hyphens, apostrophes, en dashes (as in the expression 1917–1918), commas in numerals (as in 100,000), and abbreviation periods, except where terminal duty is performed by the same period.

2. Quote marks.

3. Points within extracts, except points which mark the termination or interruption of the extract. For example, in the following sentence the commas after *bearer* and *Jones* and the period after *laurel* are not counted.

It seems that Colley Cibber, when he thought he was dying, wrote to the Prime Minister, "recommending the bearer, Mr. Henry Jones, for the vacant laurel. Lord Chesterfield will tell you more of him."

Editorial brackets and ellipsis periods belong to extracts, and therefore are not counted. Brackets sometimes occur in original matter, but not in the text of the passages cited.

Footnotes and headings of all kinds, including side-heads, are excluded from the estimate.

Colons which are not clearly anticipatory are listed as "other colons." Every reinforcing combination (comma with dash, colon with dash, period with dash, or group of suspension periods with a full stop) is listed as one point; but points occurring merely in juxtaposition, as question marks preceding parenthetical points, are counted separately.

For a list of the passages on which the first three tables are based, see the end of the chapter.

Table A, "Terminal and Other Points," shows the proportion of terminal to other points in representative passages from ten American periodicals and ten individual writers. Carlyle, Pater, and Emerson are included for the sake of comparison with contemporary authors. The periodicals range from conservative to sensational.

The terminal points are period, question mark, exclama-

(Percentages based on 1000 points for each work cited.)

	Terminal Points										Interior Points Total	Amerage Points per Sentence
	Period	Question Mark	Exclamation Point	Dash	*. . . .	!. . .†	Period with Dash	Question with Dash	Exclamation with Dash	Total		
Walter Pater	13.1	.1	.3	...	...	...	.3	.1	...	13.9	86.1	7.02—
Henry James	14.0	.5	.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	14.6	85.4	6.8 +
Thomas Carlyle	17.3	1.4	3.6	...	...	...	.3	...	.5	23.1	76.9	4.33—
P. E. More	27.2	1.3	.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	28.8	71.2	3.47+
Christian Science Monitor	28.9	.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29.3	70.7	3.41+
John Galsworthy	24.9	4.1	2.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	31.2	68.8	3.2 +
J. L. Given	31.8	.6	.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	32.6	67.4	3.06+
North American Review (George Harvey)	30.9	2.3	.5	...	...	...	...	...	...	33.7	66.3	2.96+
Agnes Repplier	32.9	.8	.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	34.3	65.7	2.92—
M. Nicholson	34.2	.5	.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	35.3	64.7	2.83+
R. W. Emerson	32.3	1.8	1.0	...	...	...	.3	...	.2	35.6	64.4	2.81—
H. G. Wells	35.2	1.2	...	...	.1	...	...	...	...	36.6	63.4	2.73+
G. K. Chesterton	38.4	.6	.1	.2	...	...	...	...	...	39.3	60.7	2.54+
Arnold Bennett	36.8	.9	2.0	...	...	.1	...	...	...	39.8	60.2	2.51+
N. Y. *Evening Post*	39.0	1.9	.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	41.0	59.0	2.44—
W. A. White	41.1	.3	.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	41.6	58.4	2.4 +
N. Y. American	40.3	1.4	.5	...	...	...	...	...	...	42.2	57.8	2.37—
N. Y. *Nation*	39.9	2.1	.5	...	...	...	...	...	...	42.5	57.5	2.35+
N. Y. Times	39.8	2.9	.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	43.0	57.0	2.32+
N. Y. *Sun*	45.1	.6	.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	46.3	53.7	2.16—
A. E. Hancock	45.6	.5	.5	...	...	...	...	...	...	46.6	53.4	2.14+
New Republic	45.5	2.3	.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	47.9	52.1	2.1 —
Saturday Evening Post	46.9	1.0	.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	48.1	51.9	2.08—
N. Y. Tribune	49.4	2.3	1.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	53.1	46.9	1.88+
S. M. Crothers	60.3	2.3	.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	63.0	37.0	1.59—

* Period with suspension periods.

† Exclamation point with suspension periods.

tion, dash, suspension points, and combinations of ordinary terminal marks with dash or suspension points. The colon at the end of a paragraph has not been counted here as a terminal point, being felt rather as a mark of incompletion suspending the words which follow.

A high terminal-point percentage means a small average number of points per sentence. A low percentage means usually a more elaborate structure, or at any rate a more elaborate pointing. In the Carlyle passage, for example, the terminal-point percentage is 23.1; the average number of points per sentence is almost 4.33. In the passage from Mr. Crothers the terminal points reach the high percentage of 63, and the average number of points per sentence is below 1.59.

The percentages for the *North American Review,* the *Nation,* the *New Republic,* the *Saturday Evening Post,* and the six newspapers range from 29.3 to 53.1, the mean percentage being 42.71. For the ten periodicals the average number of points per sentence is a little over 2.34. If the *North American Review* and the *Christian Science Monitor* are omitted, the sentence-point average is about 45.5, and the average number of points per sentence less than 2.2.

The small average per sentence in good editorial writing today is significant. The editorials published in the better newspapers and magazines are often rapidly produced; yet they must be clear, direct, often exact in details of expression, always interesting enough to satisfy a varied and sometimes critical circle of readers. They are in many cases not less than artistic. Their economical punctuation, especially the small average number of points per sentence, is made possible by straightforward expression, with strict economy of parenthetical or otherwise elaborate structure. In this respect their example is entirely good.

Of all the passages recorded in the table, the most elaborately pointed happens to be one from Pater's *Essay on Style,* the one in which students read of the rhythm which gives its musical value to every syllable, of *vraie vérité,* of self-restraint and the removal of surplusage, of the sentence "so fortunately born, 'entire, smooth, and round,' that it needs no punctuation."

Next in elaborateness is Mr. Henry James. In the passage cited, there is free omission of parenthetical points; yet the average number of points per sentence is very high —6.8 plus, as against less than 2.5 for most of the periodicals. The elaborate punctuation may help to explain the indifference in which Mr. James's writings are held by many whose literary interest is far from narrow.

The percentage next lowest after that for Mr. James is for a passage from Carlyle: 23.1 per cent of terminal points. Carlyle's omission of points for parenthesis, adjective series, and appositives may seem the height of economy; but in general his pointing is heavy and emphatic.

The Carlyle flavor in the mechanics of style is due in considerable measure to the frequency of hyphens and capitals. The following passage (from *Heroes, and Hero-Worship,* Chapman and Hall's London edition, 1885, page 147) is typical of Carlyle's punctuation, though inadequate to illustrate his free use of capitals.

One remembers always that story of the shoes at Oxford: the rough, seamy-faced, rawboned College Servitor stalking about, in winter-season, with his shoes worn-out; how the charitable Gentleman Commoner secretly places a new pair at his door; and the rawboned Servitor, lifting them, looking at them near, with his dim eyes, with what thoughts,—pitches them out of window! Wet feet, mud, frost, hunger or what you will; but not beggary: we cannot stand beggary! Rude stubborn self-help here; a whole world of squalor, rudeness, confused misery and want,

yet of nobleness and manfulness withal. It is a type of the man's life, this pitching-away of the shoes. An original man;—not a secondhand, borrowing or begging man. Let us stand on our own basis, at any rate! On such shoes as we ourselves can get. On frost and mud, if you will, but honestly on that;—on the reality and substance which Nature gives *us*, not on the semblance, on the thing she has given another than us!—

Rude stubborn self-help is a rapid group which a modern purist in punctuation might interrupt with a comma. But for the most part the passage is pointed with a lavishness not often matched in good writing today. The eight sentences carry 38 structural points or combinations: 4 periods, 3 exclamation marks, 1 exclamation mark with dash, 21 commas, 4 semicolons, 2 semicolons with dash, 1 comma with dash, 2 colons. The average number of interior breaks per sentence is 3.75. With the sentence points added, the average number of points or combinations per sentence is 4.75. The Carlyle passage for which figures are given in the table shows a lower average of points per sentence, but is similar in tone and effect.

The use of strange hyphened compounds, with marked effects on suggested accent, is a striking characteristic of Carlylese mechanics. *With his shoes worn-out, this pitching-away of the shoes, sprawl-out, putting-in the woof, Heroes have gone-out, Quacks have come-in, your Able-man* —these are characteristic. The hyphenations and the German style of capitalization have much to do with the peculiarities of Carlyle's manner.

Even without the extremes represented by the passages from Pater, Mr. James, and Carlyle, the sentence-point percentages vary sharply. They range from 28.8 for Mr. Paul Elmer More to 63 for Mr. Samuel McChord Crothers. In the passage cited Mr. More uses about 3.47 points per

sentence, Mr. G. K. Chesterton about 2.54, the *Nation* about 2.35, the *Saturday Evening Post* just under 2.1, the *New York Tribune* and Mr. Crothers about 1.88 and 1.59.

The differences are due partly to material and purpose, partly to differences of temper or varying degrees of literary skill. Mr. More, for example, is less careful of his medium than of his thought. Certainly he is less persuasive than he might be if he were more careful of style—as careful, say, as Miss Agnes Repplier or Mr. Arnold Bennett. Mr. More's elaborate sentence structure requires more than twice as many points per sentence as are used by Mr. Crothers.

Just below Mr. More, with an average of about 3.41, are the editorials from the *Christian Science Monitor*. The large average here is partly explained by the small variety of points—only periods, commas, question marks, and a few semicolons, with dependence in unusual degree upon that greatly overburdened point the comma. Of all the writers and journals listed in this chapter, except Pater, Mr. Henry James comes nearest to the comma percentage of the *Monitor*.

The last fifteen passages in the list—with the highest sentence-point averages and the smallest numbers of points per sentence—represent five newspapers, three weekly periodicals, and seven individual writers: Emerson, and Messrs. H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton, Samuel McChord Crothers, Albert Elmer Hancock, and William Allen White. Though varied enough in tone and style, they are alike in keeping the average number of points per sentence well below three. Emerson's style is essentially modern, that of Mr. Crothers almost ultra-modern.

Obviously no safe deductions can be made from the number of points per sentence except in relation to the other

things that contribute to the effect. The passages with the lowest averages of points per sentence are not necessarily better than those with higher averages. The *North American Review* editorials are not less effective than those of the *Saturday Evening Post* or the *New York Tribune;* nor is Miss Repplier's writing inferior in art or persuasiveness to that of the writers who use only three fifths as many points per sentence. In general, an average exceeding three points per sentence is likely to be a sign of heavy structure; but within limits of reasonable economy there is much latitude.

In most of the passages listed in Table B the most frequent point is the comma. The exceptions are the passages from Mr. Hancock (periods 45.6, commas 42), Mr. Crothers (periods 60.3, commas 33.7), the *Saturday Evening Post* editorials (periods 46.9, commas 39.2), and the *New York Tribune* editorials (periods 49.4, commas 41). In the aggregate of the 20,000 points represented in the table, commas outnumber periods 9801 to 7852. This is partly because the comma is the most versatile of all structural points and usually the lightest.

In the passages here represented, periods outnumber question marks 7852 to 312, about 20 times. They outnumber exclamation marks more than 50 times. But in a few of the writings listed, question and exclamation marks make a considerable proportion of the less frequent marks—3 per cent for Mr. Harvey, 3.3 for the *New York Times,* 3.7 for the *New York Tribune,* 6.5 for Mr. Galsworthy.

Third in frequency is the semicolon. Omitting a few cases of semicolon with dash, the semicolons number 899; the 616 dashes plus 66 cases of comma with dash make 682. In the aggregate of 20,000 points the semicolons make nearly 4.5 per cent; the dashes plus the reinforced dashes

TABLE B

Relative Frequency of the Punctuation Marks

(Figures based on 1000 points for each work cited. In the figures for question marks, exclamation points, and dashes, no distinction is made between terminal and interior points.)

	Periods	Commas	Question Marks	Exclamation Points	Semicolons	Semicolons with Dash	Dashes	Commas with Dash	Anticipatory Colons	Other Colons *	Colons with Dash	Curves	Periods with Suspension Periods	Exclamation with Suspension Periods
Crothers	603	337	23	4	9	...	12	3	7	...	2	...	...	...
Nicholson	342	541	7	7	57	...	21	13	...	5	...	7	...	...
Repplier	329	529	9	7	59	1	28	13	6	...	1	18	...	...
Hancock	456	420	5	6	66	...	26	8	8	4	1	...	...	...
More	272	582	14	3	61	...	24	1	24	3	...	16	...	...
Chesterton	384	475	9	2	90	1	32	...	1	...	...	6	...	...
Galsworthy	249	530	42	23	86	...	53	...	10	1	...	6	...	...
Bennett	368	444	10	22	37	...	76	1	10	3	...	28	...	1
Wells	352	511	13	1	53	...	41	...	5	2	...	20	2	...
White	411	437	3	3	55	...	52	19	7	1	...	12	...	...
Given	318	614	6	3	45	...	10	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
North American Review (Mr. Harvey)	309	550	24	6	55	1	34	8	9	...	...	4	...	...
New Republic	455	495	23	2	12	...	5	...	3	1	...	4	...	...
Saturday Evening Post	469	392	10	3	77	...	45	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Nation	399	507	21	5	40	...	13	...	8	1	...	6	...	...
N. Y. *Sun*	451	478	6	6	30	...	18	...	11	...	...	...	...	...
N. Y. Times	398	511	30	3	22	...	18	...	14	...	...	4	...	...
N. Y. *Evening Post*	390	521	19	2	30	...	30	...	8	...	...	...	...	...
N. Y. Tribune	494	410	23	14	9	...	32	...	12	...	...	6	...	...
N. Y. American	403	517	15	7	6	...	46	...	6	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	7852	9801	312	129	899	3	616	66	155	21	4	139	2	1
Percentages	32.96	49.005	1.56	.645	4.495	.015	3.08	.33	.775	.105	.02	.695	.01	.005

* Colons not clearly anticipatory.

make 3.41 per cent. This is in spite of the fact that the dash is often used in pairs.

In a few of the passages the semicolon yields third place to other points. In those from Mr. Crothers, the *New York Times,* and the *New Republic,* the question mark ranks third. In that from the New York *Evening Post,* the semicolon and dash divide honors for third place, with 3 per cent each. In those from the *New York American,* the *New York Tribune,* Mr. Arnold Bennett, and Mr. William Allen White, the dashes (including all cases of comma with dash) outnumber the semicolons. But in twelve of the twenty writers and periodicals the semicolon ranks third in frequency.

Anticipatory colons, as before a quotation or list, outnumber other colons 155 to 21. The two kinds together are not nearly equal in number to the question marks (176 to 312) and are not greatly in excess of curves (176 to 139). This is in spite of the fact that in the works listed there are a good many paragraph quotations preceded by colons. According to the decided weight of usage today, the colon is specialized as an anticipatory mark, and even as such is not often used in ordinary text except before quotations.

The use of the colon to call attention to a following remark not quoted is comparatively infrequent because likely to be too formal and self-satisfied, as if the writer were heralding his own words too loudly. Yet in certain popular periodicals this use of the colon is so common as to be a mannerism. If rapidity and informality are desired, the paragraph-suspension colon should frequently give place to the period.

It is clear that curves are not often required in ordinary writing. The average percentage of curves in the twenty passages cited is not quite seven tenths of one per cent.

TABLE C

Editorial Pointing

(1000 points from leading editorials in each publication cited.)

	Terminal Points				Interior Points										
	Period	Question Mark	Exclamation Point	Total	Comma	Semicolon	Dash	Comma with Dash	Ant. Colon *	Other Colons †	Curves	Question Mark	Exclamation Point	Semicolon with Dash	Total	Points per Sentence
Christian Science Monitor	289	4	..	293	690	14	..	..	2	..	..	1	..	..	707	3.4
North American Review (Mr. Harvey)	309	23	5	337	550	55	34	8	9	..	4	1	1	1	663	2.96
New York *Evening Post*	390	19	1	410	521	30	30	..	8	..	..	..	1	..	590	2.44—
New York American	403	14	5	422	517	6	46	..	6	..	..	1	2	..	578	2.87—
Nation	399	21	5	425	507	40	13	..	8	1	6	..	..	..	575	2.35+
New York Times	398	29	3	430	511	22	18	..	14	..	4	1	..	..	570	2.33—
New York *Sun*	451	6	6	463	478	30	18	..	11	..	..	..	..	..	537	2.02—
New Republic	455	23	1	479	495	12	5	..	3	1	4	..	1	..	521	2.01—
Saturday Evening Post	469	10	2	481	392	77	45	..	4	..	..	..	1	..	519	2.01—
New York Tribune	494	23	14	531	410	9	32	..	12	..	6	..	..	..	469	1.9 —
Totals	4057	172	42	4271	5071	295	241	8	77	2	24	4	6	1	5729	....
Percentages	40.57	1.72	.42	42.71	50.71	2.95	2.41	.08	.77	.02	.24	.04	.06	.01	57.29	2.34+

* Anticipatory colons, as before extracts formally introduced.
† "Other colons" are those not more clearly anticipatory than the semicolon or comma.

Curves are seldom used now for parenthetical clauses, being reserved principally for casual asides and for apposition within comma-pointed series.

If there were estimates for the novels of Mrs. Edith Wharton, Mr. Robert Herrick, Mr. Arnold Bennett, or Mr. H. G. Wells, the aggregate figures for suspension periods would be larger. As the works cited in this table are mostly didactic rather than imaginative, the figures for suspension periods (3 cases in 20,000 points) are too low to be representative of contemporary literature as a whole.

Table C is a repetition of certain figures from Tables A and B. The figures represent, within the limits noted, the editorial practice of one monthly magazine, three weekly magazines, and six newspapers.

The average number of points per sentence ranges from more than 3.4, an unusually high average for newspaper writing, to less than 1.9. The mean average is just over 2.34.

The points in order of frequency are period, comma, semicolon, dash, terminal question mark, anticipatory colon, terminal exclamation mark, curves, comma with dash, interior exclamation mark, interior question mark, non-anticipatory colon, and semicolon with dash. The eight cases of comma with dash and the one case of semicolon with dash occur in the *North American Review*. There are some newspapers which use colon with dash instead of colon alone before extracts separately paragraphed; but the union of comma with dash is not newspaper style. According to the weight of expert authority it ought not to be book style either.

The interior question and exclamation marks (.06 and .04 per cent) are in most cases used at the ends of quotations.

As series or compounding points they are rare in recent books and almost unknown in newspapers.

Those who advocate the smallest possible variety of structural points may have noticed that editorial writers use fewer kinds than some authors. Except for sporadic cases the editorials here listed do not use the compounding colon or the comma with dash; they do not use suspension periods at all. But they make moderate use of semicolons, dashes, colons, curves, and exclamation and question marks. These are far less often needed than commas or periods, but for their proper purposes are indispensable.

The following table shows some extremes of elaborateness, simplicity, and emotionality in punctuation.

TABLE D

SOME EXTREMES OF PUNCTUATION

	Period	Question Mark	Exclamation Point	Dash	Comma with Dash	Semicolon	Comma	Colon	Colon with Dash	Curves	Period Dash or Dash Period	Question Dash or Dash Question	Exclamation with Dash	Suspension Periods *	Exclamation with Suspension Periods
Walter Pater.....	13.1	.4	1.0	3.1	.1	3.8	75.1	1.0	.6	1.4	.3	.1	..	..	..
Henry James.....	14.0	.7	.2	9.7	..	8.6	62.7	.9	..	3.2		..	..	..	..
Horace Traubel....	79.0	8.0	....	....	..	..	9.5	3.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Harold Bell Wright	28.7	1.5	.5	10.0	..	6.4	51.1	1.8	..	..	.	..	..	..	..
Molly Make-Believe (dialogue)	18.6	5.8	10.8	19.2	.2	2.0	39.2	.4	.	..	1.4	.8	.4	.6	.6

* Alone or reinforcing a terminal period.

The percentages for Pater and Mr. Henry James are repeated, with additional specification, from Table A.

Those for Mr. Horace Traubel, representing 200 points, are based on a passage in the *Conservator* for April, 1912,

beginning after the sentence break in line 1 of page 27, and ending with line 16 of page 28.

Those for Mr. Harold Bell Wright, representing 1000 points, are for *Their Yesterdays* (omitting "What They Found in Their Yesterdays") to the second comma break in line 11 of page 47.

The figures for *Molly Make-Believe,* by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott, represent the pointing of dialogue only. The passages, containing 500 points, are pages 89-100, 116-152, and the first 12 lines of page 153. Sentences containing any narrative matter (even "he said") are omitted from the estimate.

It has already been noticed that Pater's pointing is very elaborate, the sentences represented by the figures above carrying an average of more than 7 points each. The commas alone reach the very high percentage of 75.1. The *Essay on Style* is very carefully finished, but is at best a piece of belles-lettres.

Next to Pater in average number of points per sentence is Mr. Henry James. The passage from *A Small Boy and Others* upon which the figures are based has an average of about 6.8 points per sentence. The other noticeable features are the large percentages of dashes (9.7), of semicolons (8.6), and of curves (3.2).

Pater and Mr. James are extreme in elaborateness of pointing. The opposite extreme of simplicity, so far as shown in any of the tables, appears in the passage from Mr. Horace Traubel. Of the 200 points there are only four kinds: 158 periods, 16 question marks, 19 commas, and 7 colons. The number of points per sentence is not quite 1.15. An ordinary newspaper editorial average is almost double this figure.

The effect of Mr. Traubel's pointing upon tone and movement may be judged from the following passage, from

page 28 of the *Conservator* for April, 1912. The extract is from a review of Mr. Archibald Henderson's biography of George Bernard Shaw.

This is primarily an age of love and romance. An age in which love is becoming earth big at last and romance is becoming social at last. An age in which love and romance have become imperative as never before. Yet Henderson speaking of Shaw does not say love. Is that Henderson's fault or Shaw's fault or my fault? Or is it nobody's fault? Is it just the situation? Shaw dont account for the fool. He accounts for the wise men. For the fools. But not for the fool. . . . I dont know whether his book takes me any nearer Shaw. But it takes me nearer myself. And that's the chief thing. Nearer the letter and spirit of the space and years I live in. That's the chief thing. No real democrat could be modest. That's why Shaw talks like an ass of himself. That's why Henderson takes the ass seriously. That's why I look the ass in the face and bray.

If the style of Mr. Harold Bell Wright is fairly represented by *Their Yesterdays,* the most striking characteristic of his pointing is an extravagant use of dashes. The average number of points per sentence (3.2 plus) is not extravagantly high, is in fact lower than the figures shown in Table A for Pater, Mr. James, Carlyle, Mr. Paul Elmer More, and the *Christian Science Monitor* editorials. Mr. Wright uses a larger percentage of dashes than any writer or periodical listed in the first three tables. In Table D he is exceeded in proportion of dashes only by the dialogue passages from *Molly Make-Believe,* a book which might fairly be termed the height of extremity in emotional pointing, even for dialogue. A little below Mr. Wright in proportion of dashes is Mr. Henry James. In general Mr. James and Mr. Wright are as far apart as the poles.

The peculiarly sentimental quality of Mr. Wright's style, so far as mechanics are concerned, is in part due to lavish use of capitals, as in this paragraph from page 9 of *Their Yesterdays:*

> Dreams, Occupation, Knowledge, Ignorance, Religion, Tradition, Temptation, Life, Death, Failure, Success, Love, Memories: these are the Thirteen Truly Great Things of Life—found by the man and the woman in their grown up days—found by them in Their Yesterdays—and they found no others.

Molly Make-Believe (1910), a book more widely read than historians of American literature would be glad to admit, is notable for its riotous use of emotional points. In the passages of dialogue here listed the periods are outnumbered by the dashes. Question and exclamation marks run to 5.8 and 10.8 per cent respectively; and there are suspension periods, commas with dashes, and dashes in combination with periods, with question marks, even with exclamation points. The emotional points—dashes alone or in combination, suspension periods, question and exclamation marks—make together 39.8 per cent of the points. Dialogue may be expected to run higher in strong points than narrative matter, but the proportion in *Molly Make-Believe* is extreme. One of the dramatis personae is a highly romantic girl; the others in the passages for which figures are taken are men, one of them an old man.

A full account of the mechanics of *Molly Make-Believe* would have much to say of capitals, italic, dashes within words, hesitation hyphens, and strange hyphened compounds; also of the ever-present em dashes, question and exclamation marks, and a considerable number of double dashes. One cannot help wondering what the compositors thought as they put the book into type.

WORKS LISTED IN TABLES A, B, AND C

BENNETT, ARNOLD. *The Author's Craft.* George H. Doran Co., New York, 1914. Page 9 to the paragraph break on page 57.

CARLYLE, THOMAS. *Heroes, and Hero-Worship.* Chapman & Hall, London, 1885. Lecture 5, "The Hero as Man of Letters," page 127 to line 7 from end of page 139.

CHESTERTON, GILBERT K. *Heretics,* sixth edition. John Lane Co., New York, 1909. Page 11 to line 8 from end of page 50.

The *Christian Science Monitor,* Boston. Editorials for November 9, 1917, 400 points; February 8, 1918, first two columns, and first 30 points of column 3; May 24, 1918, first three columns.

CROTHERS, SAMUEL MCCHORD. *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord and Other Essays.* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1916. Pages 1-49, 150-159, and the first 2 points on page 160.

EMERSON, RALPH WALDO. *Essays: Second Series* (vol. III, Riverside Edition of the Complete Works). Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1884. Pages 49-78, and page 79 to the sentence break in line 11.

The *Evening Post,* New York. Editorials (not including matter with the heading "At a Venture") for January 23, 1918, first 375 points; February 1 and 16; March 26, first 22 points.

GALSWORTHY, JOHN. *A Sheaf.* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1916. Page 327 to line 4 of page 365.

GIVEN, JOHN L. *Making a Newspaper.* Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1907. Pages 240-273, and first 19 lines of page 274.

HANCOCK, ALBERT ELMER. *John Keats.* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1908. Pages 1-36, and page 37 to the sentence break in line 6.

JAMES, HENRY. *A Small Boy and Others.* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1913. Pages 1-36, and the first 16 lines of page 37.

MORE, PAUL ELMER. *Aristocracy and Justice.* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1915. Pages 3-56.

The *Nation,* New York. Editorials for January, 1918, beginning with "The Week" and ending with the dash following the word *Gibraltar* in the second column of page 83; for May 18, 1918, beginning with second column of page 585, ending with line 16 of second column on page 588.

The *New Republic,* New York. Editorials for January 26, 1918, beginning with page 356, to line 6 from end of first column of page 364; February 2, 1918, page 3 from first paragraph break, pages 5-7, and page 8, first column, to line 22 from end.

The *New York American.* Editorials, 1918: January 30; February 1 and 7; February 8, omitting first paragraph of column 2; March 11, 22, 23; March 30, first 102 points; May 15.

The *New York Times.* Editorials, 1918: June 3, first 18 points; June 6, 7, 8.

The *New York Tribune*. Editorials 1918: February 1, 14, 21; March 18, to fifth paragraph break in second column.

The *North American Review*, New York. Editorials by Mr. George Harvey: October, 1917, pages 502-520; January, 1918, pages 2-8, and page 9 to the sentence break in line 9.

NICHOLSON, MEREDITH. *The Provincial American and Other Papers*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1912. Pages 117-172, and first 19 points on page 173.

PATER, WALTER. *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style*. The Macmillan Co., New York, edition with title-page date 1906. Pages 1-27, and page 28 to second comma in line 3 from end.

REPPLIER, AGNES. *Counter-Currents*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1916. Pages 1-61, 64, and first 2 points on page 65.

The *Saturday Evening Post*, Philadelphia. Editorials: September 8, 1917, first 200 points; December 1; January 5, 1918, first 200 points; February 2; March 16, first two columns, and first 43 points in third column.

The *Sun*, New York. Editorials, 1918: March 28; April 1, 20; June 3; June 4, first two columns, and first 23 points in third column.

WELLS, H. G. *What Is Coming?* The Macmillan Co., New York, 1916. Page 1 to the last sentence break on page 45.

WHITE, WILLIAM ALLEN. *The Old Order Changeth*. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1910. Page 1 to line 10 from end of page 44.

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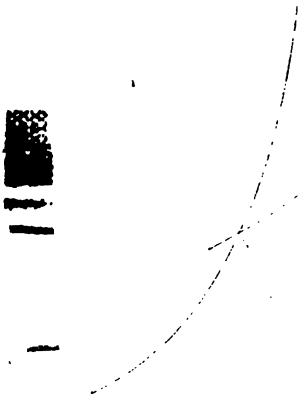

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